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THE BOOK

OF

THE SONNET

EDITED BY

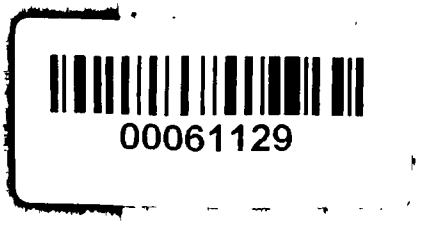
LEIGH HUNT and S. ADAMS LEE

VOL. II.

61129
a.c.

Sx P 34

LONDON
SAMPSON LOW, SON, & MARSTON
1867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ENGLISH SONNETS.

CONTINUED.

ENGLISH SONNETS.

HENRY ELLISON.

I.

ON THE ARRIVAL OF THE VESSEL ANNOUNCING THE SETTLEMENT OF DIFFERENCES WITH AMERICA.*

THERE comes a gallant vessel, in full trim,
Into the haven, high, majestical,
With music in her motion, as if all
The waves, o'er which she doth so lightly skim,
Rose up and sunk in cadence to each whim
And playful fancy of her rise and fall!
The sun is sinking, gilding yon dark pall
Of clouds, whose edges even now grow dim,
Ready to close around the grave of day!
But whence comes she, with sails the sun makes gold,
To fit them golden missions to convey?
Brings she Hesperian fruitage, long foretold,
From the far West? O yes, she comes to say,
She brings its best fruit, Peace, typed in that fable old!

* The Poetry of Real Life. By Henry Ellison. 1844.

II.

POETRY A DAILY BREAD.

O Muse, thy nourishment, which unto some
Is but as manna in the wilderness,
Found but in seasons of their strange distress
And sorrows, which unseal lips elsewhile dumb,
And make the waters in dry places come, —
The heart's Castalian springs! — to me is less
Than this, yet more; — the daily bread I bless,
And live on; household bread, and made at home!
And if, with no profane comparison,
Reader, I break and offer it to thee,
'T is as a sacrament, a sublime one,
The sacrament of Man's Humanity!
Of which partaking, I would have thee none
But as thy Brethren view, whate'er they be.

III.

BY THE SEA-SHORE.

HERE sit I, like some god of the old prime,
Just wakened into divine consciousness;
Like Neptune, when his great hand did caress
The Ocean's mane first, at the dawn of Time,
Ere his dread name had passed into a rhyme!
Here sit I, while the sea with wavy stress
And emphasis, and utterance nothing less
Than epic, lends a voice to thoughts sublime!
Here sit I, musing upon things to come
Beyond all reach of mortal eloquence;
Till, unto that which had but struck me dumb,
The great Sea, giving articulate sound and sense,
Sublimes the mighty but confused hum
Into a voice as of Omnipotence!

IV.

AGAINST PRIDE OF INTELLECT.

PROUD Poet, think'st thou that the mass of men,
Low as they seem beneath thy fancied height,
Have yet no other sources of delight,
No poesy, save that of thy poor pen?
Little as distance makes them to thy ken,
Haply that self-same distance, to their sight,
Makes thee as little seem, and with more right,
Who deem'st thyself not of them, and art then,
And just for this, beneath them. — Is yon Sun,
Rising in glory, not far better, pray,
Than thy description of it? the lark's lay
Itself, than all thy verses on it? one
Sweet flower more than all that thou canst say,
And far beyond thy best comparison?

V.

A PRIVILEGE WORTH A HARD EARNING.

It is the hardest task, the highest end,
Of all true wisdom, rightly understood,
To see the Ill, yet not o'erlook the Good,
Nor let the Ill beyond itself extend,
Nor o'er the sunny side its shadows send
Beyond its own intrinsic magnitude,
As mountains cast their shadows far, and brood
At distance, and their own real bulk transcend.
'T is hard to school the heart to be, in spite
Of injury and envy, generous still;
In seeing Good alone to take delight,
And to forget, or to forgive, the Ill:
And he who can do this, has still a right
To think godlike of man, and must, and will.

VI.

A MUSIC YET UNKNOWN, REMAINING TO BE HEARD ON EARTH.

THE music of the days which are to come
Doth haunt me ever, and my footsteps move
In time unto it, — paces of deep love
And faith unchangeable! I hear the hum
Of mighty workings, and cannot be dumb.
To the grand concert of the spheres above.
Mankind moves on, vain omens to disprove,
While overhead, and in the vanward, some
Prophetic soul, lark-like, doth soar and sing.
A few poor snatches of that music here,
My fellow-men, I, as a pledge, would bring, —
The music at my heart still answering clear,
Which tells me that there must be yet some string
Untouched, which God intended Man to hear.

EGERTON WEBBE.

TO A FOG.*

HAIL to thee, Fog! most reverend, worthy Fog!
Come in thy full-wigged gravity: I much
Admire thee:—thy old dulness hath a touch
Of true respectability. The rogue
That calls thee names (a fellow I could flog)
Would beard his grandfather, and trip his crutch;
But I am dutiful, and hold with such
As deem thy solemn company no clog.
Not that I love to travel best *incog.*,
To pounce on latent lamp-posts, or to clutch
The butcher in my arms, or in a bog
Pass afternoons; but while through thee I jog,
I feel I am true English, and no Dutch,
Nor French, nor any other foreign dog
That never mixed his grog
Over a sea-coal fire a day like this,
And bid thee scowl thy worst, and found it bliss,
And to himself said, "Yes,
Italia's skies are fair, her fields are sunny,
But, * * * * * *! Old England for my money."

* This is the sonnet with the *coda* (or tail) alluded to in the Introductory Essay, page 60. The gap in the last line is left to be

RICHARD MONCKTON MILNES, LORD HOUGHTON.

I.

HAPPINESS.

A SPLENDOR amid glooms, a sunny thread
Woven into a tapestry of cloud,
A merry child a-playing with the shroud
That lies upon a breathless mother's bed,
A garland on the front of one new-wed,
Trembling and weeping while her troth is vowed,
A school-boy's laugh that rises light and loud
In licensed freedom from ungentle dread;—
These are ensamples of the Happiness
For which our nature fits us. More and less
Are parts of all things to the mortal given,
Of Love, Joy, Truth, and Beauty. Perfect light
Would dazzle, not illuminate, our sight;
From Earth it is enough to glimpse at Heaven.

filled up by the readers, according to their respective notions of what is fittest for the nonce, or properest to be read aloud. The word "*Yes*," though an allowable rhyme to *bliss* and *this*, especially on a comic occasion, may also, if the reader pleases, be emphatically pronounced "*yis*." It is a license often taken by conversers in England; and I remember saying so to my friend, when I first read the verses. I think he said that he intended to imply the license in the rhyme; but at all events I am sure he agreed with me, and laughed heartily; and we read it so accordingly on the spot.

II.

AFTER REVISITING CAMBRIDGE AFTER A LONG ABSENCE.

I HAVE a debt of my heart's own to thee,
School of my soul, old lime and cloister shade,
Which I, strange creditor, should grieve to see
Fully acquitted and exactly paid.
The first ripe taste of manhood's best delights,
Knowledge imbibed, while mind and heart agree,
In sweet belafed talk on winter nights,
With friends whom growing time keeps dear to me, —
Such things I owe thee, and not only these:
I owe thee the far beaconing memories
Of the young dead, who, having crossed the tide
Of life where it was narrow, deep, and clear,
Now cast their brightness from the further side
On the dark-flowing hours I breast in fear.

III.

TO CHARLES LAMB.

THEE I would think one of the many wise,
Who in Eliza's time sat eminent,
To our now world, his Purgatory, sent
To teach us what true English poets prize.
Pasquilant froth and foreign galliardize
Are none of thine; but, when of gay intent,
Thou usest staid old English merriment,
Mannerly mirth, which no one dare despise.
The scoffs and girds of our poor critic rout
Must move thy pity, as amidst their mime,
Monk of Truth's Order, from thy memories
Thou dost updraw sublime simplicities,
Grand thoughts that never can be wearied out,
Showing the unreality of Time.

IV.

THE FOREST.

I LOVE the forest; I could dwell among
That silent people, till my thoughts upgrew
In nobly-ordered form, as to my view
Rose the succession of that lofty throng.
The mellow footstep on a ground of leaves
Formed by the slow decay of numerous years,
The couch of moss, whose growth alone appears
Beneath the fir's inhospitable eaves,
The chirp and flutter of some single bird,
The rustle in the brake, — what precious store
Of joys have these on poets' hearts conferred?
And then at times to send one's own voice out,
In the full frolic of *one* startling shout,
Only to feel the after-stillness more.

THOMAS WADE.

I.

SHELLEY AND KEATS, AND THEIR "REVIEWER."

Two heavenly doves I saw, which were indeed
Sweet birds and gentle, — like the immortal pair
That waft the Cyprian chariot through the air, —
And with their songs made music, to exceed
All thought of what rich poesy might be ;
At which a crow, perched on a sullen tree,
Dingy and hoarse, made baser by their brightness,
Would fain be judge of melody and whiteness,
And cawed dire sentence on those sweet-throat turtles ;
To which his fellow-flock of carrion things
Croaked clamorous assent ; but still the wings
Of those pure birds are white amid the myrtles
Of every grove, where cull they nectar's seed,
Whilst still on cold, dead flesh, those carrion creatures feed.

* From the "Tatler" of 1831. We should have given more sonnets of this poet, but have unfortunately lost the volume in which they appeared.

II.

SHELLEY.

Holy and mighty Poet of the spirit
That broods and breathes along the universe!
In the least portion of whose starry verse
Is the great breath the sphered heavens inherit —
No human song is eloquent as thine;
For, by a reasoning instinct all divine,
Thou feel'st it the soul of things; and thereof singing,
With all the madness of a skylark, springing
From earth to heaven, the intenseness of thy strain,
Like the lark's music, all around is ringing,
Laps us in God's own heart, and we regain
Our primal life ethereal! Men profane
Blaspheme thee; I have heard thee *dreamer* styled —
I've mused upon this wakefulness — and smiled.

III.

A PROPHECY.

THERE is a mighty dawning on the earth
Of human glory; dreams unknown before
Fill the mind's boundless world, and wondrous birth
Is given to great thought; and deep-drawn lore,
But late a hidden fount, at which a few
Quaffed and were glad, is now a flowing river,
Which the parched nations may approach and view,
Kneel down and drink, or float on it forever;
The bonds of spirit are asunder broken,
And matter makes a very sport of distance;
On every side appears a silent token
Of what will be hereafter, when existence
Shall even become a pure and equal thing,
And earth sweep high as heaven, on solemn wing.

IV.

CALVUS.

Bold mortal! thou dost ape the skeleton
That satirizes man and all his doings
From every opened grave; and shouldst seem one,
But for the glow-worm which is in thine eyes,
And certain airs that from thy lips arise:
Why, now to see thee at thine amorous cooings,
Or gravely preaching immortality,
To which thy living death's-head gives the lie,
Would make the shadow that all life receiveth
Shake his dim sides with horrible derision.
Tell us, old Calvus! what about thee cleaveth,
To make distinction still between the vision
Of a death's-head and thine? Get thee false hair,
For thy sole privilege to upper air.

THOMAS JAMES JUDKIN.

I.

SPECIAL PLEADING.*

(Craving the Critic's Notice.)

GENTLE, it is my wont, when newly writ
A sonnet, madrigal, or ode, to show
The same to Emily, that I may know
By her sweet face (taste's dial) if in it
Be aught unworthy of a poet's fit;
And with the knittings of her altered brow,
Or with the playful smiles that come and go,
I hold no parle, but instantly commit,
Or not, such brain-work to the flames. Thus, Sir,
I now beseech, in Courtesy's good name,
Where there is need thou wilt but gently blame,
Seeing that half the fault belongs to her;
Yet speak thy best praise freely when 't is due,
Since one kind word for her, to me is two.

* "By-Gone Moods; or, Hues of Fancy and Feeling, from the Spring to the Autumn of Life. By the Rev. T. J. Judkin, M. A., formerly of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. London, 1856."

II.

"EUREKA!"

"EUREKA!" still "Eureka!" was my cry;
While Echo shouts of answering joyance sent,
As through the garden door, on mischief bent,
I flung myself upon the sward close by
The startled Kate, who sat with musing eye,
On some old poet's charmful verse intent;
"Eureka? — what by such strange word is meant?"
"'I 've found it,' — yes; e'en that which thousands try,
And try in vain, to find within the pages
Aforetime written by the white-haired sages,
Or by long communings with present men,
Native or foreign, through life's varied stages, —
TRUTH!" — "Where?" — "In woman's lips." — And kissing then
Kate's lips, I laughing spake the word again.

* "*I have found it!*" — the famous exclamation of Archimedes when he discovered the means of finding the quantum of alloy in the crown of Hiero, King of Sicily.

III.

A CHARACTER, DRAWN FROM THE LIFE.*

AN old man with a fiddle in his hand,
Which oft on village green, at wake, or fair,
Gave motion to the feet of many a pair
Of hand-linked swains; the roamer of a band,
Who, holding neither right in house or land,
Live by the hedges in the open air;
He, with a stooping body ghostly spare,
A guileful eye, and rutted cheek long tanned
By sun, dew, wind, and rain, to sallow brown,
Besought our passing dole. "'T is hard," he said,
"At fourscore years to struggle up and down
This *awesome* country for one's daily bread."
Then, scraping from his crazy instrument
A sprightly air, in sadness on he went.

* Entitled by the author, "A Travelling Incident, — Cumberland." The only doubt perhaps of the truth of this excellent picture is suggested by the word "sadness" in the concluding line. It is not improbable that the man of the "guileful eye" had his pocket full of money at the time, and that the look of sadness in his face was a trick of trade.

IV.

PICKING AND STEALING.

Now Jane was under that old mulberry-tree,
So watched and guarded near the summer-house;
I caught her pilfering from the lower boughs, —
"Dear Heaven! what purple lips! they'll surely be
To in-door folk no doubtful history."
Now this to 'scape she stood with knitted brows
In pretty strife betwixt the *ifs* and *hows*, —
No spring was near, — and turning full on me,
She said, "Sweet cousin, thy advice I pray."
"It is," quoth I (one arm her waist enfolding,
And with the other hand her small wrists holding),
"It is, to kiss those tell-tale stains away."
But ah! as kisses oft will do, this made
The matter worse, and both of us betrayed.

GEORGE POWELL THOMAS.

I.

TO CONSTANCE, IN ABSENCE.*

THOU art not here! And ere we meet again,
Long years may pass away, and even thou,
My fair young bride, — some shadows on thy brow,
The tokens some of time and some of pain,
May, ere that hour, have stolen in, to stain
The fairest face that e'er won lover's vow. —
What matter? Be thy heart as it is now;
Let that its freshness, beauty, truth retain,
And something of its own sweet power to adorn
Whate'er it loves, with such divinest light
As hovers o'er the mountain-top at morn,
Yet makes the poorest blossom heavenly bright:
Blest in those arms from which I now am torn,
I shall note nothing, then, of time or blight.

* "Poems by George Powell Thomas, Captain Bengal Army, Author of 'Views of Simla.'"

II.

THE SAME SUBJECT.

BUT ah! the Future! That lies far away,
Hidden in mists above whose murky shade
Ev'n Hope, the flatterer, into air doth fade,
Till, of her radiant presence, scarce one ray
Lingers to light my solitary way.
Dread Future! Ever, as my heart had strayed
'Mid thy dim wastes, it hurries back, afraid,
And by the wayside sits alone, to pray, —
A timid traveller who has lost his track,
And cowers in solitude, of home to muse,
Of home, to which he fain would wander back,
Following his heart there, but the Fates refuse;
And there he sits in dark cold misery,
With Memory alone! — 't is so with me.

III.

TO FAME.

O FAME! what art thou?—Who can know, alas!
His claim to any share in thee or thine,
Till he has passed that dim and awful line,
Which no man ever passed or e'er shall pass,
Prizing thy gifts! Rare beings still amass
Treasures that after-ages count divine;
Yet ere they pass from earth, thou giv'st no sign
That they in memory shall outlive the mass.
How oft, in life, they pine for very bread,
While wordy critics smirch their lays with blots;
How oft above each unremembered head,
Year after year, the dock or hemlock rots;
And then thou nam'st their love, or woe, or mirth;
And towns that let them die boast that they gave them birth.

IV.

THE FIRST RAILWAY TRAIN IN INDIA.

A HOWL, as of a demon, startles night,
A rushing horror hurtles through the air,
And thrust from home by terrible affright,
As at an earthquake, forth the people fare,
Staring and trembling! — What unwonted sight
Astounds them, where they shudder unaware?
Is it some new avátar of his might
To whom they offer their barbaric prayer?
An incarnation new of Mahadeo,
Whose coming so delighted earth of yore?
Or is it tigers? wolves? in pity say, oh! —
"Hands off! — don't bother; — don't be such a bore!
There 's naught to shout and tremble at, I tell 'ee!
'T is only our first railway train to Delhi."

V.

JUMNOTREE.*

SHARP, clear, and crystalline, cleaving the sky
In twain, it towers forever and alone,
Save that about its feet the tall hills lie,
Like slaves around some mighty despot's throne;
While evermore, beneath its cold stern eye,
The short-lived centuries have come and flown,
And stars that round its head untiring fly,
Confess its glories ancient as their own.
The eagles shun it in their highest flight;
The clouds lie basking 'neath its eminence;
Naught nears it but thin air and heaven's sweet light,
Nor not a sound forever cometh thence,
Save of some avalanche from its summit riven,
Or thunder-tempest on its breakers driven.

* From *Jumna*, — the river, — and *aotar*, — a descent; a peak in the Himalayas, twenty-five thousand feet above the level of the sea.

GEORGE JAMES DE WILDE.

I.

THE WATER-MILL.

THERE; — it may serve perhaps some future day,
Dull though the pencil be, and duller he
Who guides it, to recall to memory
The exquisite beauties of this rural way,
Tempting the hurried traveller to delay: —
The mill down in the dell; the huge beech-tree
Flinging its great black arms protectingly
Over the useful stream, with one hot ray
From Autumn's cloudless sky touched, like a star;
The feathery greenery sheltering everywhere;
The one bright strip of greensward seen afar
Between the mossy trunks. — May never care
Come to the Mill, its clattering glee to mar,
Making all foul within, while all around is fair.

II.

WHEATHAMSTEAD.

To thy fresh slopes and hăzel-shadowed lanes,
And sedgy river with its deep green nooks,
Where sits the watching hen, and skyward looks
The water-lily ; — to thy breezy plăins
And village homes, long years gone by I came,
Lured by the măgic of a mighty name,
A glad enthusiast. I come once more, —
Not with the exulting heart which then I bore,
But with a heavy memory that never
Shall fail to shadow what bright hour soever, —
To find thee still as lovely as of yore,
And feel the poet's truth is written here, —
" A thing of beauty is a joy forever " ;
Hearty and homely, loving Hertfordshire.

* See Charles Lamb's exquisite paper in the "Essays of Elia," entitled "Mackery End, in Hertfordshire."

III.

EYDON HALL.

(The Seat of the Rev. C. F. Annesley.)

"Era il detto luogo sopra una piccola montagnetta, da ogni parte lontano alquanto alle nostre strade, di varj albuscelli e piante tutte di verde fronde ripieno, piacevoli a riguardare: in sul colmo della quale era un palagio . . . . con pratelli dattorno, e con giardini maravigliosi." — BOCCACCIO.

VERT alleys with trim trees arching o'erhead,
And ending in a vista of blue hills,
Statue, or vase, or nook where grottoed rills,
Trickling from stone to stone, clear coolness shed;
Elsewhere a pleasaunce, with quaint patterns spread
Of rarest flowers; an orangery that fills
The air with that sweet odor which distils
From Lisbon or the Azores, seaward led.
There needs but laughter from the shrubberies coming,
Ladies, and rustling silks, a gorgeous show,
And mantled cavaliers chitarras strumming
Or whispering love in willing ears; — and lo!
A picture by Lancret or by Watteau,
Or tale recorded by Boccaccio.

IV.

ON THE ARRIVAL OF SPRING.

Now is the young Spring with us: her blue eyes
And sunny smile come flushing through the tears
Rude March hath startled from her; for she hears
The gentle footfall and the wooing sighs
Of coming April, nor to him denies
(Sweet task!) the soothing of her virgin fears.
More balmy and more balmy, as he nears,
Her breath becomes; more sunny bright her eyes.
And now *to live!* — now to arouse and shake
The wintry torpor from the spirit, — now
To see the early Sun from slumber wake,
And bathe in moonshine the uplifted brow;
To shame dull Winter, — time for work, — yet take
Much holiday for art's and friendship's sake.

JOHN WATSON DALBY.

I.

AT BERKHAMSTEAD.

WATERS ! all calm and bright as heaven above,
In peace and beauty still your course pursuing ;
Ruins ! and ye wild springs ! that fondly love
To throw a deathless sweetness over ruin ;
Hills ! o'er whose brows in other days we bounded
When fresh delight was in our hearts and eyes,
And all that lay before us or surrounded,
Shone with a beauty heightened by surprise :
Had earth a stray bliss, then the quick sense found it,
From morn's first blush to ray of evening star ;
And then the natural revel well we rounded,
Lifting full cups to loving hearts afar.
Well may our own faint, staggered and astounded,
At thought of what and where those loved ones are.

II.

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

THE mirror of my life, ye lie before me!
Reflecting all its gladness and its gloom; —
There the wild joy ye never may restore me,
That, when I saw ye first, came flushing o'er me;
And there the eternal barrier of the tomb.
Crowding upon me here what memories come,
Glad meeting, pleasant lingering, and gay strolling:
Alas, how briefly shines the vision for me!
Away the glory and the joy are rolling, —
Away the glowing Future which it bore me!
And through the mind, confusing sense and sight,
Comes to my startled ear the death-bell tolling;
And a shroud covers Beauty and Delight,
Mantling the gauds of morn in glooms of night.

III.

A WAYSIDE ADVENTURE.

He was a native of the North countrie,
But left it early, — an adventurous lad;
His look I know not if severe or sad,
Shrewd surely and with even a latent glee;
And a broad deeply-furrowed brow had he.
Albeit no Scot, the accent made me glad,
Awaking love and kindly memory.
"*With song and friendship we are wisely mad,*"
Methought; "and this shall be a merry hour.
Of this man's soul I hold the secret key:
Grave, silent, strong, yet shall he feel my power,
And that of the heart-linker, Sympathy.
One word shall bring the land for which he yearns,
One magic word." — I spoke it, — *it was Burns.*

IV.

SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

THEN Scotia came to him, and *Auld Lang Syne,*
And he poured out the story of his life,
Loves, struggles, studies, hope, despair, and strife;
Much thanks, some murmurs, but no childish whine;
And ever and anon the well-loved line
That fixed a principle or stamped a truth,
And crowned in manhood the best dreams of youth,—
Ne'er seemed the Bard of Ayr so all divine.
That wayside Inn shall be remembered yet,
And all our gossip o'er that humble glass.
By chance and in a chimney nook we met,
And *Burns* and *Nature* glorified the place.

V.

A SLEEPLESS NIGHT.

TWELVE — but Macaulay had but now been closed;
Sleep could not quickly follow page so fine;
One — and strange figures filled my wakeful eye;
Two — and the lightning finds those eyes unclosed;
Three — and for no brief instant had I dozed;
Four — and slow morn did on the casement shine,
But where my strength for challenge so divine?
Five — still for slumber wholly indisposed
I on my restless pillow turn and twist,
Reaching a hopeful weariness by *six;*
And then all sense of outer objects missed,
I with the Cavaliers and Roundheads mix
Awhile, to rise an irate rogue, perplexed,
Vexing the house because myself am vexed.

VI.

AT THE AUST FERRY HOTEL.

O DAINTY diamond-ornamented fingers,
Puzzling plain folks, and leading some astray
Who pore o'er panes where the inscription lingers
Recording jovial rest, or anxious stay,
I rather wish your Latin were away,
Although the epigrams are obvious stingers;
And the fine Roman hand — it makes one say,
Was 't Coleridge, Southey, Lamb — was 't one of Earth's fine singers?
"One touch," *et cætera;* — banter as they may,
We see ourselves in him who could not pass
Nor leave remembrance of himself some way,
Though 't were but on the fragile face of glass.
And who this mild ambition would gainsay
In my opinion writes himself an ass!

VII.

A RENCÓNTRE AT TYTHERINGTON.

(Merci, Monsieur, merci!)

FORTH from the farmer's hospitable nook,
Among the trees and where the waters gushed, —
A holy calmness all the welkin hushed,
And lo! before me stood, or rather shook,
A tall gaunt figure iron want had crushed
Into a thing scarce humanlike. He spoke,
Help in his native accents did invoke,
While through his frame a tide of diverse feelings rushed.
"Poor, wretched, and from Paris!" all he said;
Yet, plainly written in his visage pale,
Fancy could still piece out the mournful tale;
And, right or wrong, the history fully read
Of the wan outcast in a Gloucester vale,
In that sad, low, strange tongue, imploring bread.

ALFRED TENNYSON.

I.

THE POLISH INSURRECTION.

BLOW ye the trumpet; gather from afar
The hosts to battle; be not bought and sold.
Arise, brave Poles, the boldest of the bold;
Break through your iron shackles, — fling them far.
O for those days of Piast, ere the Czar
Grew to this strength among his deserts cold;
When even to Moscow's cupolas were rolled
The growing murmurs of the Polish war!
Now must your noble anger blaze out more
Than when from Sobieski, clan by clan,
The Moslem myriads fell and fled before;
Than when Zamoyski smote the Tartar Khan;
Than, earlier, when on the Baltic shore
Boleslas drove the Pomeranian.

II.

A SOLDIER-PRIEST.

To J. M. K.

My hope and heart is with thee, — thou wilt be
A latter Luther and a soldier-priest
To scare church-harpies from the Master's feast;
Our dusted velvets have much need of thee:
Thou art no sabbath-drawler of old saws
Distilled from some worm-cankered homily;
But spurred at heart with fieriest energy
To embattail and to wall about thy cause
With iron-worded proof, hating to hark
The humming of the drowsy pulpit-drone
Half God's good sabbath, while the worn-out clerk
Browbeats his desk below. Thou, from a throne
Mounted in heaven, wilt shoot into the dark
Arrows of lightnings. I will stand and mark.

III.

SONNET.

O, WERE I loved as I desire to be!
What is there in the great sphere of the earth,
Or range of evil between death and birth,
That I should fear, — if I were loved by thee?
All the inner, all the outer world of pain,
Clear love would pierce and cleave, if thou wert mine;
As I have heard that somewhere in the main
Fresh-water springs come up through bitter brine.
'T were joy, not fear, clasped hand in hand with thee,
To wait for death — mute — careless of all ills,
Apart upon a mountain, though the surge
Of some new deluge from a thousand hills
Flung leagues of roaring foam into the gorge
Below us, as far on as eye could see.

CHARLES TENNYSON.

I.

THE DELIGHTS OF INTELLECT UNPERTURBING.

VEXATION waits on passion's changeful glow,
But th' intellect may rove a thousand ways,
And yet be calm while fluctuating so:
The dew-drop shakes not to its shifting rays
And transits of soft light. Be bold to choose
This never satiate freedom of delight,
Before the fiery bowl and red carouse,
And task for joy thy soul's majestic might;
So for the sensual will be rarer need;
So will thy mind a giant force assume,
Strong as the centre of the deep Maelstroom,
When flung into the calm of sightless speed;
So wilt thou scorn on lowlier aims to feed,
And go in glory to a sage's tomb.

II.

ON SEEING A CHILD BLUSH ON HIS FIRST VIEW OF A CORPSE.

'T is good our earliest sympathies to trace,
And I would muse upon a little thing, —
What brought the blush into that infant's face,
When first confronted with the rueful King?
He boldly came: what made his courage less?
A signal for the heart to beat less free
Are all imperial presences; and he
Was awed by Death's consummate kingliness,
And by the high and peerless front he bore.
No thought of dying armies crossed the lad;
He feared the stranger, though he knew no more;
Surmising and surprised, but most, afraid;
As Crusoe, wandering on the desert shore,
Saw but an alien footmark, and was sad!

III.

THE RAINBOW.

HUNG on the shower that fronts the golden west,
The rainbow bursts like magic on mine eyes,
In hues of elden promise there imprest,
Frail in its date, eternal in its guise.
The vision is so lovely that I feel
My heart endued with beauty like its own,
And taking an indissoluble seal
From what is here a moment, and is gone.
It lies so soft on the full-breasted storm,
New born o' the middle air, and dewy-pure,
And tricked in nature's choicest garniture;
What can be seen of lovelier dye or form?
While all the groves assume a ghastly stain,
Caught from the leaden rack and shining rain.

IV.

THE RINGLET.

(To ——.)

I HAVE a circlet of thy sunny hair,
And 't is, I wot, a blessing to mine eyes;
For gentle, happy thoughts are sworn to rise,
Whene'er I view it, softly folded there,
Lifeless and listless, like a treasure's key,
Unwitting of the dreams it doth compel
Of gems and gold piled high in secret cell,
Too royal for a vulgar gaze to see!
If they were stolen, the key might never tell;
If thou wert dead, what should the ringlet say?
It shows the same, betide thee ill or well,
Smiling on earth, or shrouded in decay!
And were cold winter with thee, Isabel,
I might be smiling here on blossoms of thy May.

V.

ON STARTLING SOME PIGEONS.

A HUNDRED wings are dropped as soft as one,
Now ye are lighted; lovely to my sight
The fearful circle of your gentle flight,
Rapid and mute, and drawing homeward soon;
And then, the sober chiding of your tone
(As there ye sit, from your own roofs arraigning
My trespass on your haunts, so boldly done)
Sounds like a solemn and a just complaining!
O happy, happy race! for though there clings
A feeble fear about your timid clan,
Yet are ye blest! with not a thought that brings
Disquietude; while proud and sorrowing man,
An eagle, weary of his mighty wings,
With anxious inquest fills his little span.

VI.

SILKWORMS AND SPIDERS.

THE worm long fosters his transforming sleep,
But claims th' inalienable life again,
Which, though it be but one, yet seemeth twain,
The trance between is all so deadly deep:
The carefûl spider spreads before his lair
The web, ygathered near his filmy heart
Withouten throes or any vital smart,
And of his entrails makes his foes a snare.
In both a mighty mystery resides,
A truth, on whose development they thrive;
One for the cravings of his life provides,
One weaves himself another way to live.
To reach the secret is beyond our lore,
And man must rest, till God doth furnish more.

FREDERICK TENNYSON.*

I.

THE VILLAGE BENEFACTRESS.

DEAR Village Maid, who from thy little store,
Of knowledge, and of riches, canst supply
The flower and fruitage of humanity,
Balm for thyself, and comfort for the poor;
I never pass the woodbines round thy door
But in my heart there swells a wistful sigh, —
O, could I change all gauds of vanity
For peace like thine, increasing evermore!
By day thy sweet face, passing through the gate,
Is welcome as the bounty-bearing light,
Thy frugal lamp is to the desolate
A star of promise, dawning through the night;
O, if all hearts were only like to thine,
Night would not be, though stars should cease to shine!

* "Days and Hours," by Frederick Tennyson, 1854. We have taken a liberty with the author, and with the reader, in calling these stanzas sonnets, and setting them forth in the present manner; for though sonnets they are in point of construction, after a favorite illegitimate fashion, yet the author does not so call them, nor in his pages are they thus distinguished by headings. They form portions,

II.

HER VISITS TO HER MOTHER'S GRAVE.

Ofttimes I mark thee, while the village tower
Takes the first glow of the new-risen morn,
Bending among the tombs like one forlorn;
There is thy mother's grave; there, sun or shower,
Art thou; and there is cherished every flower
She loved the best; and 't is thy secret trust
That in the blossoms springing from her dust
Lives something of her to this very hour.
There, on the Sabbath days, mayst thou be seen
The first of all, the last to linger there;
Sweet memories of her virtues come between
Thy whispered words, and mingle with thy prayer;
And aged women, doomed to endless toil,
Stay by the porch, and weep with thee, or smile.

and not even consecutive portions, of a poem consisting of twelve of them, entitled *Martha;* so that perhaps we have wronged them in that respect also. But they so worthily record a beautiful character, and it is so pleasant to see the names of this family of poets in conjunction, — for Frederick Tennyson is a brother of the Laureate's, — that, as he does not appear to have written any sonnets professed, we were tempted to bring him and his heroine into our volume in this manner.

III.

HER SECRET GRIEF.

"O, SURE," some said, "to her kind Heaven hath dealt
Freedom from earthly penance, that can share
The common ills of others, and their care
Surely so free a heart hath never felt
The fetters of great sorrows, that can melt
With simple tears, and laugh with simple joys."
Alas! they had not heard the hidden sighs
Folded within thy conscience, pure of guilt:
There was another's heart that answered thee;
He grew beside thee, till your hopes were one;
Far off he sleeps, afar beyond the sea;
And thou hast vowed through Death's great gates alone
To pass into thy bridal, and to lay
His image near thee on thy dying day.

IV.

HER SICKNESS AND RECOVERY.

WHEN thou wert laid in sickness and in pain
Through one sad autumn, O the falling leaf
Fell gentlier by thy casement in its grief,
And still as holy tears, the evening rain;
Methought the hamlet ne'er would wake again,
So mighty was the sorrow and the calm;
And children wailed, and many a withered palm
Was raised to heaven for thee, and not in vain.
The meek, the rugged, wept beside thy door;
The evil-minded took another way;
And fewer were the murmurs of the poor
For their own troubles than thine evil day;
And when another May-day brought thee forth,
Something from heaven had fallen on the earth.

V.

HER EXEMPTION FROM THE COMMON ASPECTS OF DECAY.

O HEART of grace, that, like the lowly flowers,
Bendest beneath the storms, but dost not break,
Whom in thy tears kind thoughts do not forsake,
As blessed odors live in thunder-showers;
Whether the sun shines forth, or tempest lowers,
Thou art unshaken. In thine utmost need,
While iron pride is shattered like a reed,
Thy winged hopes fly onward with the hours.
Therefore thine eye through mist of many days
Shines bright; and beauty, like a lingering rose,
Sits on thy cheek, and in thy laughter plays,
While wintry frosts have fallen on thy foes;
And like a vale that breathes the western sky,
Thy heart is green, though summer is gone by.

VI.

A WISH FOR HER DURING THE REMAINDER OF HER LIFE.

WHATEVER be my lot, I pray that thou
Mayst see a cloudless autumn of thy years,
Whose summer-tide hath been o'ercast with tears;
Though like the clouds, that vainly overflow
The deep clear sky, they have not dimmed thy brow,
Or darkened the quick flame of liberty
Lit in that eye, which fashioned it and thee.
Be thine a vale where western breezes blow
The livelong year, where thou mayst walk at even
'Mid cherished flowers along a garden slope,
And breathe in peace the purity of heaven,
And turn unto the sun with eyes of hope,
With sweet birds every morn to make thee cheer,
And sound of living waters in thine ear.

AUBREY THOMAS DE VERE.

I.

REASONS FOR BEING BELOVED.

THE reason why we love thee, dost thou ask?
We love for many reasons joined in one:—
Because thy face is fair to look upon;
Because, when pains or toils our hearts o'ertask,
In sunny smiles of thine they love to bask;
Because thou honorest all, and harmest none;
Because thy froward moods so soon are gone;
Thy many faults and foibles wear no mask;
Because thou art a woman. Unto me
A gracious woman is a child mature;
Docile, and gentle, though with many a lure
Enriched, and, in a soft subjection, free;
A sanguine creature, full of winning ways;
Athirst for love, and shyly pleased with praise.

II.

REQUESTING TO BE JUDGED BY THE DESIRE, AND NOT BY THE DESERT.

(Headed by the Author, "A Poet to a Painter.")

THAT which my fault has made me, O paint not :
Paint me as that which I desire to be.
The unaccomplished good that died in thought,
Deep buried in my heart, seek out, set free ;
And all I might have been concede to me :
The veil my error and the world have wrought,
Remove : the cloud disperse : erase the blot :
Bid from my brow the temporal darkness flee.
In that celestial and pure fount, whereof
Some drops affused my childhood, bathe me wholly ;
And shield me from my own deserts : lest they
Who now but see me by the light of love,
A sterner insight learn from thee one day ;
And love pass from them, like some outworn folly.

III.

LOVE SELF-SACRIFICED.

(Entitled by the Author, "Incompatibility.")

FORGIVE me that I love you as I do,
Friend patient long; too patient to reprove
The inconvenience of superfluous love.
You feel that it molests you, and 't is true.
In a light bark you sit, with a full crew; —
Your life, full-orbed, compelled strange love to meet,
Becomes, by such addition, incomplete.
Because I love, I leave you. O, adieu!
Perhaps when I am gone the thought of me
May sometimes be your acceptable guest.
Indeed you love me: but my company
Old time makes tedious; and to part is best.
Not without Nature's will are natures wed: —
O gentle Death, how dear thou mak'st the dead!

IV.

LOVE VINDICATING ITS REJECTER.

(Entitled by the Author, "Troilus and Cressida.")

HAD I been worthy of the love you gave,
That love withdrawn had left me sad, but strong:
My heart had been as silent as my tongue;
My bed had been unfevered as my grave:
I had not striven for what I could not save:
Back, back to heaven my great hopes I had flung:
To have much suffered, having done no wrong,
Had seemed to me that noble part the brave
Account it ever. What this hour I am
Affirms the unworthiness that in me lurked:
Some sapping poison through my substance worked,
Some sin not trivial, though it lacked a name,
Which ratifies the deed that you have done
With plain approval. Other plea seek none.

V.

VENICE BY DAY.

THE splendor of the Orient, here of old
Throned with the West, upon a waveless sea,
Her various-vested, resonant jubilee
Maintains, though Venice hath been bought and sold.
In their high stalls of azure and of gold
Yet stand, above the servile concourse free,
Those brazen steeds, — the Car of Victory
Hither from far Byzantium's porch that rolled.
The wingéd Lions, Time's dejected thralls,
Glare with furled plumes. The pictured shapes that glow
Like sunset clouds condensed upon the walls
Still boast old wars, or feasts of long ago;
And still the Sun his amplest glory pours
On all those swelling domes and watery floors.

VI.

VENICE IN THE EVENING.

ALAS! 'mid all this pomp of the ancient time,
And flush of modern pleasure, dull Decay
O'er the bright pageant breathes her shadowy gray.
As on from bridge to bridge I roam and climb,
It seems as though some wonder-working chime
(Whose spell the Vision raised and still can sway)
To some far source were ebbing fast away;
As though, by man unheard, with voice sublime
It bade the sea-born Queen of Cities follow
Her Sire into his watery realm far down:
Beneath my feet the courts sound vast and hollow;
And more than Evening's darkness seems to frown
On sable barks that, swift yet trackless, fleet
Like dreams o'er dim lagoon and watery street.

VII.

INDEPENDENCE.

FREE born, it is my purpose to die free.
Away, degrading cares; and ye not less,
Delights of sense and gauds of worldliness;—
I have no part in you, nor you in me.
They that walk brave wear the world's livery;
Their badge of service is their sumptuous dress.
Seek then your prey in gilded palaces;
Revere my hovel's humble liberty.
Are there no flowers on earth, in heaven no stars,
That we must place in such low things our trust?
Let me have noble toils, if toil I must,—
The patriot's task or friendship's sacred cares.
Beside my board that man shall break no crust
Who sells his birthright for a feast of dust.

VIII.

CORREGGIO'S CUPOLAS AT PARMA.

CREATURES all eyes and brows, and tresses streaming
By speed divine blown back; within, all fire
Of wondering zeal, and storm of bright desire;—
Round the broad dome the immortal throngs are beaming:
With elemental powers the vault is teeming.
We gaze, and, gazing, join the fervid choir,
In spirit launched on wings that ne'er can tire,
Like those that buoy the breasts of children dreaming.
The exquisitest hand that e'er in light
Revealed the subtlest smile of new-born pleasure
The depth here fathoms, and attains the height;
Is strong the strength of heavenly hosts to measure;
Draws back the azure curtain of the skies,
And antedates our promised Paradise.

IX.

WRITTEN WHILE SAILING ON THE GULF OF LEPANTO.

ALL round they lie, deep breath to breath replying, —
Those outworn seamen in their well-earned sleep :
From the blue concave to the dim blue deep
No sound beside. Fluttering all night, or sighing,
Since morn the breeze delicious hath been dying,
And now is dead. On yonder snowy steep
The majesty of Day diffused is lying ;
Whilst Evening's Powers in silence seaward creep,
From glens that violet-shade the lilac vest
Of Delphi's hills. Ye mariners, sleep well !
Run slowly, golden sands, and noiselessly.
There stands the great Corinthian citadel ;
Parnassus there. Rest, wearied pinnace, rest !
Sleep, sacred air ! sleep on, marmorean sea !

EDMUND OLLIER.

I.

ON WILSON'S PICTURE OF SOLITUDE.

A FITTING nook for meditative men! —
A region of neglect and glimmering gloom,
Yet secretly unfolding many a bloom
Worthy of gardens, — to be denizen.
A pillared grotto once was in this glen,
And sculptured shapes; but see how hungry doom
Has gnawn them half away, while o'er them loom
Black branches, arching like a dusky den;
Between whose trunks you see, quite overbrowed
With intertwisted foliage, dark and drear,
White convent walls gleam like a parting ray
Under the forehead of a thunder-cloud;
And silently and sad, from year to year,
The cowled monk stagnates, withering away.

* From Ainsworth's Magazine.

II.

A DREAM.

A MAN stood on a barren mountain-peak
In the night, and cried, "O world of heavy gloom!
O sunless world! O universal tomb!
Blind, cold, mechanic sphere, wherein I seek
In vain for Life and Love, till Hope grows weak,
And falters towards Chaos! Vast, blank doom!
Huge darkness in a narrow prison-room!
Thou art dead, — dead!" Yet, ere he ceased to speak,
Across the level ocean, in the East,
The moon-dawn grew; and all that mountain's side
Rose, newly-born from empty dusk. Fields, trees,
And deep glen-hollows, as the light increased,
Seemed vital; and from heaven, bare and wide,
The moon's white soul looked over lands and seas.

III.

A VISION OF OLD BABYLON.

OUTLEAPING from the Present's narrow cage,
I floated on the backward waves of Time,
Until I landed in that antique age
When the now hoary world was in its prime.
How young, and fresh, and green, all things did look!
I stood upon a broad and grassy plain,
Shrouded with leaves, between which, like a brook
Dashed on the turf in showers of golden rain,
The broken sunlight mottled all the land;
And soon, between the trees, I was aware
Of a vast city, girt with stony band,
That hung upon the burning blue-bright air,
Like snowy clouds which that strange architect,
The Wind, has with his wayward fancies decked.

IV.

THE SUBJECT OF BABYLON CONTINUED.

A WILDERNESS of beauty! a domain
Of visions and stupendous thoughts in stone, —
The sculptured dream of some enchanter's brain, —
There did I see, all sunning in their own
Splendor and warmth; a thousand palaces,
Where tower looked out on tower; all overgrown
With pictured deeds, and coiling traceries,
And monstrous shapes in strange conjunction met,
The idol phantoms of an age long past,
In midst of which the winged Bull was set;
And I saw temples of enormous size,
Silent yet thronged; and pyramids that cast
Shadows upon each golden-peaked pavilion,
And on the column flushed with azure and vermilion.

V.

THE SUBJECT OF BABYLON CONTINUED.

AND on the top of all the wind-blown towers,
The thronging terraces, and ramparts fair,
And the flat house-roof scorching in the air,
Elysian gardens bloomed with breadths of flowers,
And clouds of moist green leaves, that tenderly
Cooled the fierce radiance sight could scarcely bear;
Or over grassy lawns hung fluttering high,
Like birds upon the wing, half pausing there;
Shadows, where winds drooped lingering with a sigh.
And there were fountains all of beaten gold,
That seemed alive with staring imagery,
Fantastical as death; from which forth rolled,
Like spirits out of Sleep's enchanted ground,
Far-flashing streams, that flung a light all round.

HON. MRS. NORTON.

I.

SONNET.

LIKE an enfranchised bird, that wildly springs,
With a keen sparkle in his glancing eye,
And a strong effort in his quivering wings,
Up to the blue vault of the happy sky, —
So my enamored heart, so long thine own,
At length from Love's imprisonment set free,
Goes forth into the open world alone,
Glad and exulting in its liberty:
But like that helpless bird (confined so long,
His weary wings have lost all power to soar)
Who soon forgets to trill his joyous song,
And, feebly fluttering, sinks to earth once more, —
So from its former bonds released in vain,
My heart still feels the weight of that remembered chain.

II.

TO MY BOOKS.

SILENT companions of the lonely hour, —
Friends who can never alter or forsake,
Who for inconstant roving have no power,
And all neglect, perforce, must calmly take, —
Let me return to you; this turmoil ending
Which worldly cares have in my spirit wrought,
And, o'er your old familiar pages bending,
Refresh my mind with many a tranquil thought,
Till haply meeting there, from time to time,
Fancies, the audible echo of my own,
'T will be like hearing in a foreign clime
My native language spoke in friendly tone,
And with a sort of welcome I shall dwell
On these, my unripe musings, told so well.

MRS. ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

I.

EXPRESSIONLESS.

WITH stammering lips and insufficient sound,
I strive and struggle to deliver right
That music of my nature, day and night,
With dream and thought and feeling, interwound,
And inly answering all the senses round
With octaves of a mystic depth and height,
Which step out grandly to the infinite
From the dark edges of the sensual ground!
This song of soul I struggle to outbear
Through portals of the sense, sublime and whole,
And utter all myself into the air;
But if I did it, — as the thunder-roll
Breaks its own cloud, — my flesh would perish there,
Before that dread apocalypse of soul!

II.

TEARS.

THANK God, bless God, all ye who suffer not
More grief than ye can weep for. That is well, —
That is light grieving! lighter, none befell,
Since Adam forfeited the primal lot.
Tears! what are tears? The babe weeps in its cot,
The mother singing; at her marriage-bell,
The bride weeps; and before the oracle
Of high-faned hills, the poet hath forgot
That moisture on his cheeks. Thank God for grace,
Whoever weep; albeit, as some have done,
Ye grope tear-blinded, in a desert place,
And touch but tombs, — look up! Those tears will run
Soon, in long rivers, down the lifted face,
And leave the vision clear for stars and sun.

III.

PERPLEXED MUSIC.

(Affectionately inscribed to Elizabeth Jago.)

EXPERIENCE, like a pale musician, holds
A dulcimer of patience in his hand;
Whence harmonies we cannot understand
Of God's will in his worlds, the strain unfolds
In sad, perplexéd minors. Deathly colds
Fall on us while we hear, and countermand
Our sanguine heart back from the fancy-land,
With nightingales in visionary wolds.
We murmur, "Where is any certain tune,
Or measured music, in such notes as these?"
But angels, leaning from the golden seat,
Are not so minded! Their fine ear hath won
The issue of completed cadences;
And smiling down the stars, they whisper, "Sweet."

IV.

FUTURITY WITH THE DEPARTED.

AND, O beloved voices, upon which
Ours passionately call, because erelong
Ye brake off in the middle of that song
We sang together softly, to enrich
The poor world with the sense of love, and witch
The heart out of things evil, — I am strong,
Knowing ye are not lost for aye among
The hills with last year's thrush. God keeps a niche
In Heaven to hold our idols; and albeit
He brake them to our faces, and denied
That our close kisses should impair their white,
I know we shall behold them raised, complete,
The dust shook off their beauty, glorified,
New Memnons singing in the great God-light.

V.

THE POET.

THE poet hath the child's sight in his breast
And sees all new. What oftenest he has viewed,
He views with the first glory. Fair and good
Pall never on him; at the fairest, best,
But stand before him, holy and undressed
In week-day false conventions, such as would
Drag other men down from the altitude
Of primal types, too early dispossessed.
Why, God would tire of all his heavens as soon
As thou, O godlike, childlike poet, didst,
Of daily and nightly sights of sun and moon!
And therefore hath He set thee in the midst,
Where men may hear thy wonder's ceaseless tune,
And praise His world forever, as thou bid'st.

VI.

HUGH STUART BOYD.

(His Blindness.)

God would not let the spheric lights accost
This God-loved man, and bade the earth stand off
With all her beckoning hills, whose golden stuff
Under the feet of the royal sun is crossed.
Yet such things were, to him, not wholly lost, —
Permitted, with his wandering eyes, light-proof,
To have fair visions rendered full enough
By many a ministrant accomplished ghost;
And seeing, to sounds of softly-turned book-leaves,
Sappho's crown-rose, and Meleager's spring,
And Gregory's starlight, on Greek-burnished eves:
Till Sensual and Unsensual seemed one thing
Viewed from one level, — earth's reapers at the sheaves,
Not plainer than Heaven's angels marshalling!

VII.

HUGH STUART BOYD.

(Legacies.)

THREE gifts the dying left me : Æschylus,
And Gregory Nazianzen, and a clock
Chiming the gradual hours out like a flock
Of stars, whose motion is melodious.
The books were those I used to read from, thus
Assisting my dear teacher's soul to unlock
The darkness of his eyes ; now, mine they mock,
Blinded in turn, by tears : now, murmurous
Sad echoes of my young voice, years agone,
Intoning, from these leaves, the Grecian phrase,
Return and choke my utterance. Books, lie down
In silence on the shelf within my gaze!
And thou, clock, striking the hour's pulses on,
Chime in the day which ends these parting days!

VIII.

FLUSH OR FAUNUS.

You see this dog. It was but yesterday
I mused, forgetful of his presence here,
Till thoughts on thoughts drew downward tear on tear;
When from the pillow, where wet-cheeked I lay,
A head, as hairy as Faunus, thrust his way
Right sudden against my face; two golden-clear
Large eyes astonished mine; a drooping ear
Did flap me on either cheek, to dry the spray!
I started first, as some Arcadian,
Amazed by goatly god in twilight grove.
But as my bearded vision closelier ran
My tears off, I knew Flush, and rose above
Surprise and sadness; thanking the true Pan,
Who, by low creatures, leads to heights of love.

IX.

SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE.*

THE face of all the world is changed, I think,
Since first I heard the footsteps of thy soul
Move still, oh, still, beside me; as they stole
Betwixt me and the dreadful outer brink
Of obvious death, where I, who thought to sink,
Was caught up into love and taught the whole
Of life in a new rhythm. The cup of dole
God gave for baptism, I am fain to drink,
And praise its sweetness, sweet, with thee anear;
The names of country, heaven, are changed away,
For where thou art or shalt be, there or here;
And this — this lute and song — loved yesterday
(The singing angels know) are only dear
Because thy name moves right in what they say.

* This title is to be understood of all the sonnets that follow.

X.

WHAT can I give thee back, O liberal
And princely giver, who hast brought the gold
And purple of thine heart, unstained, untold,
And laid them on the outside of the wall,
For such as I to take, or leave withal,
In unexpected largesse? Am I cold,
Ungrateful, that for these most manifold
High gifts, I render nothing back at all?
Not so. Not cold! but very poor instead!
Ask God who knows! for frequent tears have run
The colors from my life, and left so dead
And pale a stuff, it were not fitly done
To give the same as pillow to thy head.
Go farther! — let it serve to trample on.

XI.

CAN it be right to give what I can give?
To let thee sit beneath the fall of tears
As salt as mine, and hear the sighing years
Re-sighing on my lips renunciative
Through those infrequent smiles which fail to live
For all thy adjurations? O my fears
That this can scarce be right! We are not peers,
So to be lovers; and I own and grieve
That givers of such gifts as mine are must
Be counted with the ungenerous. Out, alas!
I will not soil thy purple with my dust,
Nor breathe my poison on thy Venice-glass,
Nor give thee any love, — which were unjust.
Beloved, I only love thee! let it pass.

XII.

YET, love, mere love, is beautiful indeed,
And worthy of acceptation. Fire is bright,
Let temple burn or flax! An equal light
Leaps in the flame from cedar-plant or weed.
And love is fire: and when I say at need,
I love thee — Mark! — *I love thee!* — in thy sight
I stand transfigured, glorified aright,
With conscience of the new rays that proceed
Out of my face toward thine. There 's nothing low
In love, when love the lowest. Meanest creatures
Who love God, God accepts while loving so.
And what I *feel*, across the inferior features
Of what I *am*, doth flash itself, and show
How that great work of Love enhances Nature's.

XIII.

AND therefore, if to love can be desert,
I am not all unworthy. Cheeks as pale
As these you see, and trembling knees that fail
To bear the burden of a heavy heart,
This weary minstrel-life that once was girt
To climb Aornus, and can scarce avail
To pipe now 'gainst the woodland nightingale
A melancholy music? — why advert
To these things? O beloved, it is plain
I am not of thy worth nor for thy place;
And yet because I love thee, I obtain
From that same love this vindicating grace,
To live on still in love and yet in vain;
To bless thee, yet renounce thee to thy face.

XIV.

INDEED this very love which is my boast,
And which, when rising up from breast to brow,
Doth crown me with a ruby large enow
To draw men's eyes, and prove the inner cost, —
This love even, all my worth, to the uttermost,
I should not love withal, unless that thou
Hadst set me an example, shown me how,
When first thine earnest eyes with mine were crossed,
And love called love. And thus, I cannot speak
Of love even, as a good thing of my own.
Thy soul hath snatched up mine, all faint and weak,
And placed it by thee on a golden throne;
And that I love (O soul, I must be meek!),
Is by thee only, whom I love alone.

XV.

AND wilt thou have me fashion into speech
The love I bear thee, finding words enough,
And hold the torch out, while the winds are rough,
Between our faces, to cast light on each?
I drop it at thy feet. I cannot teach
My hand to hold thy spirit so far off
From myself — me — that I should bring thee proof,
In words, of love hid in me out of reach.
Nay, let the silence of my womanhood
Commend my woman-love to thy belief, —
Seeing that I stand unwon, however wooed,
And rend the garment of my life, in brief,
By a most dauntless, voiceless fortitude,
Lest one touch of this heart convey its grief.

DAVID GRAY.

I.

TO THE MAVIS.

SWEET Mavis! at this cool delicious hour
Of gloaming, when a pensive quietness
Hushes the odorous air, — with what a power
Of impulse unsubdued, thou dost express
Thyself a spirit! While the silver dew
Holy as manna on the meadow falls,
Thy song's impassioned clarity, trembling through
This omnipresent stillness, disenthralls
The soul to adoration. First I heard
A low, thick, lubric gurgle, soft as love,
Yet sad as memory, through the silence poured
Like starlight. But the mood intenser grows,
Precipitate rapture quickens, move on move
Lucidly linked together, till the close.

II.

TO A BROOKLET.

O DEEP unlovely brooklet, moaning slow
Through moorish fen in utter loneliness!
The partridge cowers beside thy loamy flow
In pulseful tremor, when with sudden press
The huntsman fluskers through the rustled heather.
In March thy sallow buds from vermeil shells
Break satin-tinted, downy as the feather
Of moss-chat that among the purplish bells
Breasts into fresh new life her three unborn.
The plover hovers o'er thee, uttering clear
And mournful-strange his human cry forlorn.
While wearily, alone, and void of cheer
Thou guid'st thy nameless waters from the fen,
To sleep unsunned in an untrampled glen.

III.

TO THE MOON.

WITH what a calm serenity she smooths
Her way through cloudless jasper sown with stars!
Chaster than virtue, sweeter than the truths
Of maidenhood, in Spenser's knightly wars.
For what is all Belphœbe's golden hair,
The chastity of Britomart, the love
Of Florimel so faithful and so fair,
To thee, thou Wonder! And yet far above
Thy inoffensive beauty must I hold
Dear Una, sighing for the Red Cross Knight
Through all her losses, crosses manifold.
And when the lordly Lion fell in fight,
Who, who can paragon her fearful woe?
Not thou, not thou, O Moon! didst ever passion so.

IV.

MORPHIA.

O PRECIOUS morphia! I sanctify
The soothing power that in a painless swoon
Laps my weak limbs, giving me strength to lie,
Till sacred dawn increases until noon:
Then when, from his meridional height,
The sun devolves, and cooling breezes wake,
It is a comfort and divine delight
The weary bed exhausted to forsake,
And bathe my temples in the blessed air.
But when day wanes and the wind-moaning night
Deepens to darkness, then thy virtue rare,
O dream-creative liquid! brings delight,
Thy silver drops diffusive kindly steep
The senses in the golden juice of sleep.

V.

THE MOON.

COME, light-foot Lady! from thy vaporous hall,
And, with a silver-swim into the air,
Shine down the starry cressets one and all
From Pleiades to golden Jupiter!
I see a growing tip of silver peep
Above the full-fed cloud, and lo! with motion
Of queenly stateliness, and smooth as sleep,
She glides into the blue for my devotion.
O sovran Beauty! standing here alone
Under the insufferable infinite,
I worship with dazed eyes and feeble moan
Thy lucid persecution of delight.
Come, cloudy dimness! Dip, fair dream, again!
O God! I cannot gaze, for utter pain.

VI.

MAIDENHOOD.

A SACRED land, to common men unknown,
A land of bowery glades and greenwoods hoary,
Still waters where white stars reflected shone,
And ancient castles in their ivied glory.
Fair knights caparisoned in golden mail,
And maidens whose enchantment was their beauty,
Met but to whisper each the passion-tale,
For love was all their pleasure and their duty.
Here cedar bark, as with a moving will,
Floated through liquid silver all untended;
Here wrong and baseness ever came to ill,
And virtue with delight was sweetly blended.
This land, dear Spenser! was thy fair creation,
Made through fine glamour of imagination.

VII.

THE LUGGIE.

O FOR the days of sweet Mythology,
When dripping Naiads taught their streams to glide!
When, 'mid the greenery, one would ofttimes spy
An Oread tripping with her face aside.
The dismal realms of Dis by Virgil sung,
Whose shade led Dante, in his virtue bold,
All the sad grief and agony among,
O'er Acheron, that mournful river old,
Ev'n to the Stygian tide of purple gloom!
Pan in the forest making melody!
And far away where hoariest billows boom,
Old Neptune's steeds with snorting nostrils high!
These were the ancient days of sunny song;
Their memory yet how dear to the poetic throng!*

* Speaking of the poems of David Gray ("Poems by David Gray, with Memoirs of his Life, Boston, 1864"), the Rev. W. R. Alger says: "The poems of this ill-fated and winsome young Scotchman, heart-brother of Robert Burns, are marked by rare tenderness and sincerity, and by that fascinating facility of verbal touch which is one of the choicest characteristics of true genius. Such a pure and pathetic story, such lucid and breathing poetry, as we have here, are charged with a blessed ministry for a coarse

ALEXANDER SMITH.

I.

SOLITARY AT CHRISTMAS, BUT NOT SAD.

Joy like a stream flows through the Christmas streets,
But I am sitting in my silent room,
Sitting all silent in congenial gloom;—
To-night, while half the world the other greets
With smiles and grasping hands, and drinks and meats,
I sit, and muse on my poetic doom.
Like the dim scent within a budded rose,
A joy is folded in my heart; and when
I think on Poets nurtured 'mong the throes,
And by the lowly hearths of common men,—
Think of their works, some song, some swelling ode
With gorgeous music growing to a close,
Deep-muffled as the dead-march of a god,—
My heart is burning to be one of those.

'and bustling age, for a reckless utilitarian people. The feelings of love, pity, and grief this little book is calculated to awaken will exert a salutary influence, softening the heart, and nourishing human sympathy and poetic sentiment."

II.

THE CHRISTMAS SOLITUDE VARIED WITH THE CHRISTMAS STREETS.

SHEATHED is the river as it glideth by,
Frost-pearled are all the boughs in forest old,
The sheep are huddling close upon the wold,
And over them the stars tremble on high.
Pure joys these winter-nights around me lie;
'T is fine to loiter through the lighted streets
At Christmas time, and guess from brow and pace
The doom and history of each one we meet,
What kind of heart beats in each dusky case;
Whiles startled by the beauty of a face
In a shop-light a moment. Or, instead,
To dream of silent fields, where calm and deep
The sunshine lieth like a golden sleep, —
Recalling sweetest looks of summers dead.

III.

PROPHETICAL SELF-REFLECTED WORDS.

I WROTE a name upon the river sands
With her who bore it standing by my side,
Her large dark eyes lit up with gentle pride,
And leaning on my arm with claspèd hands;
To burning words of mine she thus replied,
"Nay, write not on thy heart. This tablet frail
Fitteth as frail a vow. Fantastic bands
Will scarce confine these limbs." I turned love-pale,
I gazed upon the rivered landscape wide,
And thought how little *it* would all avail
Without her love. 'T was on a morn of May,
Within a month I stood upon the sand;
Gone was the name I traced with trembling hand, —
And from my heart 't was also gone away.

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM.*

I.

ONE'S OWN MOOD REFLECTED IN A DAY-DREAM.

("On the Sunny Shore.")

CHECKERED with woven shadows as I lay
Among the grass, blinking the watery gleam,
I saw an Echo-Spirit in his bay
Most idly floating in the noontide beam.
Slow heaved his filmy skiff, and fell, with sway
Of ocean's giant pulsing; and the Dream,
Buoyed like the young moon on a level stream
Of greenish vapor at decline of day,
Swam airily, watching the distant flocks
Of sea-gulls, whilst a foot, in careless sweep,
Touched the clear-trembling cool with tiny shocks
Faint-circling; till at last he dropped asleep,
Lulled by the hush-song of the glittering deep,
Lap-lapping drowsily the heated rocks.

* "The Music-Master, a Love Story; and Two Series of Day and Night Songs. 1855."

II.

AUTUMNAL TWILIGHT, WITH FRIENDS.

Now Autumn's fire burns slowly along the woods,
And day by day the dead leaves fall and melt,
And night by night the monitory blast
Wails in the keyhole, telling how it passed
O'er empty fields, or upland solitudes,
Or grim wide wave; and now the power is felt
Of melancholy, tenderer in its moods
Than any joy indulgent Summer dealt.
Dear friends, together in the glimmering eve,
Pensive and glad, with tones that recognize
The soft invisible dew on each one's eyes,
It may be, somewhat thus we shall have leave
To walk with memory, when distant lies
Poor Earth, where we were wont to live and grieve.

III.

ONE'S OWN TOMBSTONE.

In dream of thought to be among the years
That are not born, like years of long ago,
Who bows not, trembling? Dusk, with steps as slow
As mine, crept through the churchyard, dropping tears
Like one that mourned. I mused and mused; — methought
Some months, some years were gone, and in that spot
Of graves is lingering a thoughtful boy.
Amid the twilight stillness, deep and lone,
He stoops, to read an old half-buried stone,
And weeds the mosses that almost destroy
The letters of the name, which is — my own.
The wind about the old gray tower makes moan
He rises from the grave with saddened brow,
And leaves it to the night, and sighs, as I do now.

JAMES DODDS.

CRAIGCROOK.

(To JOHN HUNTER.)

I HAVE not found so true a Harmony
As crowns this life of thine, my much-loved friend!
See! the bright roses o'er the violets bend;
The oaks with hazels sing in windy glee;
The lawn looks coy up to yon gazing hill;
On the same bough are dove and blackbird seen;
And, as we talk under this alley green,
The robin makes a third, with answering trill.
Within, thy home is meet for such a spot:
Thy youthful dreams — how rare! — have grown to truth;
Still rarer, life keeps fine as dream of youth;
Rarest and best, *this* harmony is given, —
Thy Real drinks music from Ideal Thought,
And Earth but avenues the gate to Heaven!

JOHN HUNTER.

I.

A REPLICATION OF RHYMES.*

(To JAMES DODDS.)

THINE own life too hath reached a Harmony
Of rounder, nobler swell than mine, my friend!
HE is the Hero, whose strong soul can bend
A turbulent nature, panting in the glee
Of young ambition to ascend the hill
Where Worldly Greatness, crowned with power, is seen;
And, conqueror of himself, can seek the green
Low vale where true Peace dwells, and list the trill
Of home-bred joys that sanctify the spot.
Earth's dazzling meteors for the Torch of Truth
Thou hast exchanged; and for wild dreams of youth
More glorious aims and nobler gifts are given, —
A Soul of power, a well of lofty Thought,
A chastened Hope that ever points to Heaven.

* This is one of the very few English sonnets written on the Italian principle mentioned at page 53 of the Introductory Essay.

II.

ELIA.

A GENTLE spirit, sweet and pure and kind,
Though strangely witted, — "high fantastical," —
Who mantles his deep feelings in a pall
Of motley hues, by contrast more combined,
That seems to hide, yet heightens what 's enshrined
Beneath; — who, by a power unknown to all,
Save him alone, can summon at a call
A host of jarring elements, entwined
In wondrous brotherhood, — humor, wild wit,
Quips, cranks, puns, sneers, — with clear sweet thought
profound; —
And stinging jests, with honey for the wound; —
The subtlest lines of all fine powers, split
To their last films, then marvellously spun
In magic web, whose million hues are one!

III.

AUTUMN TWILIGHT.

(To ——.)

BLEST Twilight, — season of my soul's best hopes!
How dear to gaze upon thy deepening skies,
Breathing their balm o'er Autumn's mellow dyes!
To list the voice of streamlets down the slopes
Of these sweet uplands, and from out yon copse
To catch the thrush's note, low breathed, like sighs
From Love's too happy heart, when meeting eyes
Transfuse the mutual soul; and, oft as drops
The pale sear leaf, to muse on change and chance,
Yet feel no fears! How should I, loveliest one!
While thou art with me, and in thy deep glance
I read my future fate, undimmed by woes,
Whose course shall, like this day's, move gently on,
In varying beauty, to its last calm close?

IV.

DAY-DAWN.

THE first low fluttering breath of wakening Day
Stirs the wide air. Thin clouds of pearly haze
Float slowly o'er the sky, to meet the rays
Of the unrisen sun, — whose faint beams play
Among the drooping stars, kissing away
Their waning eyes to slumber. From the gaze,
Like snow-wreath at approach of vernal days,
The moon's pale circlet melts into the gray.
Glad Ocean quivers to the gentle gleams
Of rosy light that touch his glorious brow,
And murmurs joy with all his thousand streams ;
And Earth's fair face is mantling with a glow,
Like youthful Beauty's, in its changeful hue,
When slumbers, rich with dreams, are bidding her adieu.

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JOHN STUART BLACKIE.

I.

TO JAMES DODDS AND JOHN HUNTER.

(Arcades Ambo.)

SWEET pair of doves! The mystic notes that stirred
Dodona's groves with oracles from Jove
Gave not a sweeter voice. Were I a bird,
I'd sing with you of joy and peace and love,
And nests on earth more blest than halls in heaven;
But me a sterner power inspires: like car
With fiery breath and brazen snortings driven
O'er groaning rails and white smoke wreathing far,
My joy is action, and my music blasts
Of high-spurred energy that scorns delay:
Rock in your pleasure-boats! 'T is well. With masts
Sore-straining 'neath the gale I dash the spray:
Your souls in CRAIGCROOK'S warbling heaven shall dwell;
Mine drives from earth the harnessed Devil to hell!

II.

HIGHLAND SOLITUDE.

In the lone glen the silver lake doth sleep;
Sleeps the white cloud upon the sheer black hill:
All moorland sounds a solemn silence keep;
I only hear the tiny trickling rill
'Neath the red moss. Athwart the dim gray pall
That veils the day a dusky fowl may fly;
But, on this bleak brown moor, if thou shalt call
For men, a spirit will sooner make reply.
Come hither, thou whose agile mind doth flit
From talk to talk, and tempt the pensive mood.
Converse with men makes sharp the glittering wit,
But God to man doth speak in solitude.
Come, sit thee down upon this old gray stone;
Men learn to think, and feel, and pray, alone.

III.

AT LOCH ERICHT.

No railways! — thank Heaven at length I 'm free
From travelling cockneys, wondering at a hill,
From lisping ladies, who from huge towns flee,
To nurse feigned raptures at a tumbling rill!
From large hotels and finely-furnished inns,
With all things but pure kindness in their plan,
And from sleek waiters, whose obsequious grins
Do make me loathe the very face of man!
Smooth modern age, which no rough line doth mar,
All men must praise thy very decent law!
But in this bothie I am happier far,
Where I must feed on oats, and sleep on straw.
For why? Here men look forth from honest faces,
And are what thing they seem, without grimaces.

IV.

BEN MUICHDHUI.

O'ER broad Muichdhui sweeps the keen cold blast;
Fat whirrs the snow-bred, white-winged ptarmigan;
Sheer sink the cliffs to dark Loch Etagan,
And all the hill with shattered rock lies waste.
Here brew ship-foundering storms their force divine;
Here gush the fountains of wild-flooding rivers;
Here the strong thunder frames the bolt that shivers
The giant strength of the old twisted pine.
Yet, even here, on the bare waterless brow
Of granite ruin, I found a purple flower,
A delicate flower, as fair as aught, I trow,
That toys with zephyrs in my lady's bower.
So Nature blends her powers; and he is wise
Who to his strength no gentlest grace denies.

V.

THE STATUE OF ALBERT DÜRER AT NÜRNBERG

SOLID and square doth master Albert stand,
An air of hardy well-proved thought he wears,
As one that never flinched; and in his hand
The cunning tools of his high art he bears.
From thy grave face severe instructions come;
The peace that 's born of well-fought fights is thine
Before thy look frivolity is dumb,
And each true workman feels his craft divine.
First-born of Jove, immortal Toil! by thee
This city rose, by thee, so quaintly fair,
It stands, with well-hewn stone in each degree,
Turret, and spire, and carvéd gable rare.
Toil shaped the worlds; and on Earth's fruitful sod
Man works, a fellow-laborer with God.

VI.

WEIMAR.

Thou little Weimar, in the Saxon land,
All hail! With little Palestine and Greece
Well sistered, thou dost use a wide command,
And pile thy thoughtful trophies where fair Peace
Her bloodless victories tells. A common place
And common streets I see; but where we stand
The gods once walked; and now an humble race
Lives on the memory of that Titan band.
Such the high function of God's elect men, —
To fill time with their presence, and inspire
The many with strong will, and loftier ken,
And elevate our lives with a faith higher
Than our poor selves. O Heavenly Father, give
This faith to me! By this the righteous live.

VII.

BERLIN.

Statues on statues piled, and in the hand
Of each memorial man a soldier's sword!
Fit emblem of a tame and subject land,
Mustered and marked by a drill-sergeant-lord.
And these long lines of formal streets, that go
In rank and file, by a great captain's skill
Were marched into this cold and stately show,
Where public order palsies private will.
Order is strong; strong law the stars commands;
But birds by wings, and thought by freedom lives;
The crystalled stone compact and foursquare stands,
But man by surging self-born impulse strives.
Much have ye done, lords of exact Berlin,
But one thing fails, — the soul to your machine!

VIII.

LOCH ERICHT.

THE lake is smooth; the air is soft and still;
The water shines with a broad lambent gleam;
And the white cloud sleeps on the hoary hill,
With the mild glory of a sainted dream.
From the steep crag the distant bleatings come
Of sheep far-straggling o'er the turfy way;
And the harsh torrent, softened to a hum,
Gives murmurous music from the stony brae.
If here on earth a heaven may be, thou hast
Heaven here to-day; now give thy soul repose.
To-morrow, down this glen the ruffian blast
May sweep, while high the enchafèd billow throws
Its surly might, and smites the sounding shore,
And the swollen rills rush down with thunderous roar!

AMERICAN SONNETS.

AMERICAN SONNETS.

COLONEL DAVID HUMPHREYS.*

I.

THE SOUL.

MY heaven-born soul! by body unconfined,
Leave that low tenement and roam abroad;
Forestall the time, when, left each clog behind,
Thy flight shall mount where never mortal trod.
Even now, methinks, upborne in trancéd dreams,
The disencumbered essence tries its wings,
Sees better planets, basks in brighter beams,
To purer sight mysterious symbols brings,
Of unconceived, unutterable things.
Though dust returned to dust the worms devour,
Thee can dread Death annihilate or bind?
There, King of Terrors! stops thy dreaded power;
The bright assurgent, from all dross refined,
High o'er the immense of space regains the world of mind.

* Born 1753; died 1818.

II.

ADDRESSED TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS, THE PRINCE OF BRAZIL, ON TAKING LEAVE OF THE COURT OF LISBON, JULY, 1797.

FAREWELL, ye flowery fields! where Nature's hand
Profusely sheds her vegetable store,
Nurtured by genial suns and zephyrs bland!
Farewell, thou Tagus! and thy friendly shore:
Long shall my soul thy lost retreats deplore,
Thy haunts where shades of heroes met my eyes.
As oft I mused where Camoens trod before,
I saw the god-like form of Gama rise,
With chiefs renowned beneath your eastern skies.
O, long may peace and glory crown thy scene!
Farewell, just Prince! no sycophantic lay
Insults thy ear. Be what thy sires have been,
Thy great progenitors! who oped the way
Through seas unsailed before to climes of orient day.

RICHARD BINGHAM DAVIS.*

I.

TO MUSIC.

YES, I must bid thy ecstasies farewell,
Sweet soother of my soul! no more thy power,
That oft has beamed upon the gloomy hour,
Shall fold my spirit in ethereal spell.

No more I 'll watch thee, wafted on the wing
Of fragrant eve, from the lone warbler's throat;
No more I 'll hear thee touch the expressive string,
Or swell with softening grace the airy note.

Past is thy charm that could my bosom thrill,
That name, on thy soft undulations borne,
Which fancy heard in each delightful thrill —
Eliza's name is from my bosom torn,
And when Eliza dwells not in the strain,
Thy sweetest notes are harsh, my energies in vain.

* Born 1771; died 1799.

II.

TO THE SETTING MOON.

MUSING in meditation's charméd dream,
Joyless I see thy placid radiance fade,
Hid by the dusky hills, whose humid shade
Quenches thy lustre floating in the stream.

How great the contrast from thy cheerful light!
How deep, how silent is the sudden gloom!
Still, as the sullen vapors of the night,
Dark, as the shade that wraps the haunted tomb!

'T is thus thy phantoms, Hope, delusive sweep
Along the shades of life, while fancy dwells
Fond on the prospect, — sudden burst the spells,
And leave the disappointed wretch to weep;
While the fond memory of past delight
Deepens the gloom of desperation's night!

III.

TO FELICIA, ON HER RETURN TO NEW YORK.

WHEN, through the dark damp mists of tedious night,
Sweet lucid tints announce the cheerful day,
Gay beats the enthusiast heart that hails the ray
Illuminating scenes of new delight.

When, the long dreary reign of Winter past,
The landscape brightens, and the wild-flowers bloom;
When every gale wafts music and perfume,
Rich is the fancy's treasure, sweet the soul's repast.

Such, in the circle where Felicia shines,
Are Friendship's feelings on her blest return;
Friendship — who for her loss no more repines,
But bids each anxious bosom cease to mourn.
To hail Felicia is our sweet employ,
And every sense and every heart is joy.

I.

ROBERT TREAT PAINE.

TO BELINDA.

PATHETIC chantress! Nature's feeling child!
Thou, like thy parent, rul'st a varied sphere,
Where judgment ripens, fancy blossoms wild;
Thy page the landscape, and thy mind the year.

Oft in the rainbow's heaven-enchasing beams,
Thy hand, sweet limner, many a pencil dips;
And oft receive Piera's sacred streams
New inspiration from Belinda's lips.

Pure, as the bosom of the virgin rose,
Blooms the rich verdure of a heart sincere;
And e'en Belinda's smile more radiant glows,
Through the clear mirror of a pearly tear.

But ah! her lyre in hushed oblivion sleeps,
While Edwin mourns, and all Parnassus weeps!

II.

TO THE COUNTRY GIRL.

HASTE, Zephyr, fly, and waft to Anna's ear
This bosom echo, — 't is my heart's reply ;
Say, to her notes I listened with a tear,
And caught the sweet contagion of a "sigh."

But ah! that "last adieu!" oh! stern request!
Cold, as those tides of vital ice that roll
Through the chilled channels of her maiden breast,
When prudish sanctity congeals the soul.

O'er Fancy's fairy lawn no more we rove ;
No more, in Rhyme's imperious hood arrayed,
Hold airy converse in the Muse's grove,
While you a shadow seemed, and I a shade.

For know, Menander can thy features trace,
Nor more thy verse admire than idolize thy face.

III.

TO ANNA LOUISA, ON HER ODE TO FANCY.

SAY, child of Phœbus and the eldest Grace,
Whose lyre melodious, and enchanting face,
The blended title of thy birth proclaim ;
Say, lovely Naiad of Castalia's streams,
Why thus thy Muse on Fiction's pillow dreams,
And fondly wooes the rainbow-mantled Dame ?
When stern Misfortune, with her Gorgon frown,
Congeals the fairy face of Bliss to stone,
Hope to the horns of Fancy's altar flies ;
But what gay nun would seek asylum there,
When Beauty, Love, and Fortune crown the fair,
And Hymen's temple greets her raptured eyes ?
Then haste, sweet Nymph, to bless the ardent youth ;
Then, Fancy, " blush to be excelled by Truth."

IV.

ELEGIAC SONNET,

Inscribed to the Memory of M. M. Hays, Esq.

HERE sleep'st thou, Man of Soul! Thy spirit flown,
How dark and tenantless its desert clay!
Cold is that heart, which throbbed at sorrow's moan,
Untuned that tongue that charmed the social day.

Where now the Wit, by generous roughness graced?
Or Friendship's accent, kindling as it fell?
Or Bounty's stealing foot, whose step untraced
Had watched pale Want, and stored her famished cell?

Alas! 't is all thou art! whose vigorous mind
Inspiring force to Truth and Feeling gave,
Whose rich resources equal power combined,
The gay to brighten, and instruct the grave!

Farewell! Adieu! Sweet peace thy vigils keep;
For Pilgrim Virtue sojourns here to weep!

V.

TO PHILENIA, ON A STANZA IN HER ADDRESS TO MYRA.*

THY "bosom bankrupt," fair Peru divine,
Of every mental gem, that e'er has shone,
In dazzled Fancy's intellectual mine,
Or ever spangled Virtue's radiant zone!

Thy "bosom bankrupt"! — Nature, sooner far,
Shall roll, exhausted, flowerless springs away,
Leave the broad eye of noon without a ray,
And strip the path to heaven of every star.

Thy "bosom bankrupt"! — Ah! those sorrows cease
Which taught us how to weep, and how admire;
The tear that falls to soothe thy wounded peace,
With rapture glistens o'er thy matchless lyre.
Ind and Golconda, in one *firm* combined,
Shall sooner bankrupt than Philenia's mind.

* The stanza which suggested this sonnet is highly encomiastic on Mr. Paine. It is here given from the "Massachusetts Magazine" of February, 1793: —

"Since first Affliction's dreary frown
Gloomed the bright summer of my days,
Ne'er has my bankrupt bosom known
A solace like his peerless praise."

WASHINGTON ALLSTON.

I.

ON A FALLING GROUP, IN THE LAST JUDGMENT OF MICHAEL ANGELO.

How vast, how dread, o'erwhelming is the thought
Of space interminable! to the soul
A circling weight that crushes into naught
Her mighty faculties! a wondrous whole,
Without or parts, beginning, or an end!
How fearful then on desp'rate wings to send
The fancy e'en amid the waste profound!
Yet, born as if all daring to astound,
Thy giant hand, O ANGELO, hath hurled
E'en human forms, with all their mortal weight,
Down the dread void, — fall endless as their fate!
Already now they seem from world to world
For ages thrown; yet doomed, another past,
Another still to reach, nor e'er to reach the last!

II.

ON REMBRANDT, OCCASIONED BY HIS PICTURE OF JACOB'S DREAM.

As in that twilight, superstitious age,
When all beyond the narrow grasp of mind
Seemed fraught with meanings of supernal kind,
When e'en the learned philosophic sage,
Wont with the stars through boundless space to range,
Listened with reverence to the changeling's tale;
E'en so, thou strangest of all beings strange!
E'en so thy visionary scenes I hail;
That, like the rambling of an idiot's speech,
No image giving of a thing on earth,
Nor thought significant in reason's reach,
Yet in their random shadowings give birth
To thoughts and things from other worlds that come,
And fill the soul, and strike the reason dumb.

III.

ON SEEING THE PICTURE OF ÆOLUS, BY PELLEGRINO TIBALDI.

FULL well, Tibaldi, did thy kindred mind
The mighty spell of Buonarroti own.
Like one who, reading magic words, receives
The gift of intercourse with worlds unknown,
'T was thine, deciph'ring Nature's mystic leaves,
To hold strange converse with the viewless wind;
To see the spirits, in embodied forms
Of gales and whirlwinds, hurricanes and storms.
For, lo! obedient to thy bidding, teems
Fierce into shape their stern, relentless lord;
His form of motion ever-restless seems;
Or, if to rest inclined his turbid soul,
On Hecla's top to stretch, and give the word
To subject winds that sweep the desert pole.

IV.

ON THE DEATH OF COLERIDGE.

And thou art gone, most loved, most honored friend!
No, nevermore thy gentle voice shall blend
With air of earth its pure ideal tones,
Binding in one, as with harmonious zones,
The heart and intellect. And I no more
Shall with thee gaze on that unfathomed deep,
The human soul; as when, pushed off the shore,
Thy mystic bark would through the darkness sweep,
Itself the while so bright! For oft we seemed
As on some starless sea, — all dark above,
All dark below, — yet, onward as we drove,
To plough up light that ever round us streamed.
But he who mourns is not as one bereft
Of all he loved: — thy living truths are left.

V.

ON A STATUE OF AN ANGEL, BY BENAIMÉ, OF ROME, IN THE POSSESSION OF J. S. COPLEY GREEN, ESQ.

O, WHO can look on that celestial face,
And kindred for it claim with aught on earth?
If ever here more lovely form had birth —
No, never that supernal purity, — that grace
So eloquent of unimpassioned love!
That, by a simple movement, thus imparts
Its own harmonious peace, the while our hearts
Rise, as by instinct, to the world above.
And yet we look on cold, unconscious stone.
But what is *that* which thus our spirits own
As Truth and Life? 'T is not material Art,
But e'en the sculptor's soul to sense unsealed.
O, never may he doubt — its witness so revealed —
There lives within him an immortal part!

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

I.

OCTOBER.

Ay, thou art welcome, heaven's delicious breath,
When woods begin to wear the crimson leaf,
And suns grow meek, and the meek suns grow brief,
And the year smiles as it draws near its death.
Wind of the sunny South! O, still delay
In the gay woods and in the golden air,
Like to a good old age released from care,
Journeying, in long serenity, away.
In such a bright, late quiet, would that I
Might wear out life like thee, 'mid bowers and brooks,
And, dearer yet, the sunshine of kind looks,
And music of kind voices ever nigh;
And when my last sand twinkled in the glass,
Pass silently from men, as thou dost pass.

II.

MIDSUMMER.

A POWER is on the earth and in the air,
From which the vital spirit shrinks afraid,
And shelters him in nooks of deepest shade,
From the hot steam and from the fiery glare.
Look forth upon the earth, — her thousand plants
Are smitten; even the dark sun-loving maize
Faints in the field beneath the torrid blaze;
The herd beside the shaded fountain pants;
For life is driven from all the landscape brown;
The bird hath sought his tree, the snake his den,
The trout floats dead in the hot stream, and men
Drop by the sun-stroke in the populous town:
As if the Day of Fire had dawned, and sent
Its deadly breath into the firmament.

III.

NOVEMBER.

YET one smile more, departing, distant Sun!
One mellow smile through the soft vapory air,
Ere, o'er the frozen earth, the loud winds run,
Or snows are sifted o'er the meadows bare,
One smile on the brown hills and naked trees,
And the dark rocks whose summer wreaths are cast,
And the blue gentian flower, that, in the breeze,
Nods lonely, of her beauteous race the last.
Yet a few sunny days, in which the bee
Shall murmur by the hedge that skirts the way,
The cricket chirp upon the russet lea,
And man delight to linger in thy ray.
Yet one rich smile, and we will try to bear
The piercing winter frost, and winds, and darkened air.

IV.

CONSUMPTION.

Ay, thou art for the grave; thy glances shine
Too brightly to shine long; another Spring
Shall deck her for men's eyes, but not for thine —
Sealed in a sleep that knows no wakening.
The fields for thee have no medicinal leaf,
And the vexed ore no mineral of power;
And they who love thee wait in anxious grief
Till the slow plague shall bring the fatal hour.
Glide softly to thy rest, then. Death should come
Gently to one of gentle mould like thee,
As light winds wandering through groves of bloom
Detach the delicate blossom from the tree.
Close thy sweet eyes, calmly, and without pain;
And we will trust in God to see thee yet again.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

I.

AUTUMN.

THOU comest, Autumn, heralded by the rain,
With banners, by great gales incessant fanned,
Brighter than brightest silks of Samarcand,
And stately oxen harnessed to thy wain!
Thou standest, like imperial Charlemagne,
Upon thy bridge of gold; thy royal hand
Outstretched with benedictions o'er the land,
Blessing the farms through all thy vast domain.
Thy shield is the red harvest-moon, suspended
So long beneath the heaven's o'erhanging eaves;
Thy steps are by the farmer's prayers attended;
Like flames upon an altar shine the sheaves;
And, following thee, in thy ovation splendid,
Thine almoner, the wind, scatters the golden leaves!

II.

DANTE.

TUSCAN, that wanderest through the realms of gloom,
With thoughtful pace, and sad, majestic eyes,
Stern thoughts and awful from thy soul arise,
Like Farinata from his fiery tomb.
Thy sacred song is like the trump of doom;
Yet in thy heart what human sympathies,
What soft compassion glows, as in the skies
The tender stars their clouded lamps relume!
Methinks I see thee stand, with pallid cheeks,
By Fra Hilario in his diocese,
As up the convent-walls, in golden streaks,
The ascending sunbeams mark the day's decrease;
And, as he asks what there the stranger seeks,
Thy voice along the cloister whispers, "Peace!"

III.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

From the Spanish of Lope de Vega.

SHEPHERD! that with thine amorous, sylvan song
Hast broken the slumber which encompassed me, —
That mad'st thy crook from the accursèd tree,
On which thy powerful arms were stretched so long!
Lead me to mercy's ever-flowing fountains;
For thou my shepherd, guard, and guide shalt be;
I will obey thy voice, and wait to see
Thy feet all beautiful upon the mountains.
Hear, Shepherd! — thou who for thy flock art dying,
O, wash away these scarlet sins, for thou
Rejoicest at the contrite sinner's vow.
O, wait! — to thee my weary soul is crying, —
Wait for me! — Yet why ask it, when I see,
With feet nailed to the cross, thou 'rt waiting still for me!

IV.

THE BROOK.

From the Spanish.

LAUGH of the mountain! — lyre of bird and tree!
Pomp of the meadow! mirror of the morn!
The soul of April, unto whom are born
The rose and jessamine, leaps wild in thee!
Although, where'er thy devious current strays,
The lap of earth with gold and silver teems,
To me thy clear proceeding brighter seems
Than golden sands, that charm each shepherd's gaze.
How without guile thy bosom, all transparent
As the pure crystal, lets the curious eye
Thy secrets scan, thy smooth, round pebbles count!
How, without malice murmuring, glides thy current!
O sweet simplicity of days gone by!
Thou shunn'st the haunts of man, to dwell in limpid fount,

JAMES GATES PERCIVAL.

I.

THE POET.

DEEP sunk in thought, he sat beside the river,
Its wave in liquid lapses glided by,
Nor watched, in crystal depth, his vacant eye
The willow's high o'erarching foliage quiver.
From dream to shadowy dream returning ever,
He sat, like statue, on the grassy verge;
His thoughts, a phantom train, in airy surge
Streamed visionary onward, pausing never.
As autumn wind, in mountain forest weaving
Its wondrous tapestry of leaf and bower,
O'ermastering the night's resplendent flower
With tints, like hues of heaven, the eye deceiving;
So, lost in labyrinthine maze, he wove
A wreath of flowers; the golden thread was love.

II.

NIGHT.

Am I not all alone? — The world is still
In passionless slumber, — not a tree but feels
The far-pervading hush, and softer steals
The misty river by. Yon broad bare hill
Looks coldly up to heaven, and all the stars
Seem eyes deep fixed in silence, as if bound
By some unearthly spell, — no other sound
But the owl's unfrequent moan. — Their airy cars
The winds have stationed on the mountain peaks.
Am I not all alone? — A spirit speaks
From the abyss of night, "Not all alone:
Nature is round thee with her banded powers,
And ancient genius haunts thee in these hours;
Mind and its kingdom now are all thine own."

III.

WINTER is now around me, and the snow
Has thrown its mantle over herb, tree, flower;
The icicle has tapestried the bower,
And in a crystal sheet the rivers flow;
And mustering from the north, at evening blow
The hollow winds, and through the star-lit hour
Shake from the icy wood a rattling shower,
That tinkles on the glassy crust below;
And Morning rises in a saffron glow,
Pouring her splendor through the fretted grove,
In tints that round the heart enchantment throw,
Like what the Graces in their girdle wove;
And shining on the mountain's frosted brow,
That o'er the gilded landscape looks afar,
Her kindling beams the virgin mantle strow
With drops of gold that twinkle like a star!

IV.

THE blue heaven spreads before me with its keen
And countless eyes of brightness, — worlds are there, —
The boldest spirit cannot spring, and dare
The peopled universe that burns between
This earth and nothing. Thought can wing its way
Swifter than lightning-flashes or the beam
That hastens on the pinions of the morn;
But quicker than the glowing dart of day
It tires, and faints along the starry stream, —
A wave of suns through countless ether borne,
Though infinite, eternal! yet one power
Sits on the Almighty Centre, whither tend
All worlds, and beings from time's natal hour,
Till suns and all their satellites shall end.

JONES VERY.

I.

THE ROBIN.

THOU need'st not flutter from thy half-built nest,
Whene'er thou hear'st man's hurrying feet go by,
Fearing his eye for harm may on thee rest,
Or he thy young unfinished cottage spy;
All will not heed thee on that swinging bough,
Nor care that round thy shelter spring the leaves,
Nor watch thee on the pool's wet margin now,
For clay to plaster straws thy cunning weaves;
All will not hear thy sweet outpouring joy,
That with morn's stillness blends the voice of song;
For over-anxious cares their souls employ,
That else upon thy music borne along,
And the light wings of heart-ascending prayer,
Had learned that Heaven is pleased thy simple joys to share.

II.

MORNING.

THE light will never open sightless eyes,
It comes to those who willingly would see;
And every object, hill, and stream, and skies,
Rejoice within the encircling line to be;
'T is day: the field is filled with busy hands,
The shop resounds with noisy workmen's din,
The traveller with his staff all ready stands
His yet unmeasured journey to begin;
The light breaks gently too within the breast, —
Yet there no eye awaits the crimson morn,
The forge and noisy anvil are at rest,
Nor men nor oxen tread the fields of corn,
Nor pilgrim lifts his staff, — it is no day
To those who find on earth their place to stay.

III.

THY BEAUTY FADES.

THY beauty fades, and with it too my love,
For 't was the selfsame stalk that bore its flower;
Soft fell the rain, and breaking from above
The sun looked out upon our nuptial hour;
And I had thought forever by thy side
With bursting buds of hope in youth to dwell;
But one by one Time strewed thy petals wide,
And every hope's wan look a grief can tell:
For I had thoughtless lived beneath his sway,
Who like a tyrant dealeth with us all,
Crowning each rose, though rooted on decay,
With charms that shall the spirit's love enthrall,
And for a season turn the soul's pure eyes
From virtue's changeless bloom, that time and death defies.

IV.

THE SPIRIT-LAND.

FATHER! thy wonders do not singly stand,
Nor far removed where feet have seldom strayed;
Around us ever lies the enchanted land,
In marvels rich to thine own sons displayed;
In finding thee are all things round us found;
In losing thee are all things lost beside:
Ears have we, but in vain strange voices sound,
And to our eyes the vision is denied;
We wander in the country far remote,
'Mid tombs and ruined piles in death to dwell;
Or on the records of past greatness dote,
And for a buried soul the living sell;
While on our path bewildered falls the night;
That ne'er returns us to the fields of light.

GEORGE HILL.

I.

LIBERTY.

THERE is a spirit working in the world,
Like to a silent subterranean fire;
Yet, ever and anon, some monarch, hurled
Aghast and pale, attests its fearful ire.
The dungeoned nations now once more respire
The keen and stirring air of Liberty.
The struggling giant wakes, and feels he's free.
By Delphi's fountain-cave, that ancient choir
Resume their song; the Greek astonished hears,
And the old altar of his worship rears.
Sound on, fair sisters! sound your boldest lyre, —
Peal your old harmonies as from the spheres!
Unto strange gods too long we've bent the knee,
The trembling mind, too long and patiently.

II.

SPRING.

Now Heaven seems one bright, rejoicing eye;
And Earth her sleeping vesture flings aside,
And with a blush awakes as does a bride;
And Nature speaks, like thee, in melody.
The forest, sunward, glistens, green and high;
The ground each moment, as some blossom springs,
Puts forth, as does thy cheek, a lovelier dye;
And each new morning some new songster brings.
And, hark! the brooks their rocky prisons break,
And echo calls on echo to awake,
Like nymph to nymph. The air is rife with wings,
Rustling through wood or dripping over lake.
Herb, bud, and bird return, — but not to me
With song or beauty, since they bring not thee.

PARK BENJAMIN.

I.

FLOWERS LOVE'S TRUEST LANGUAGE.

FLOWERS are Love's truest language; they betray,
Like the divining-rods of Magi old,
Where precious wealth lies buried, not of gold,
But love, — strong love, that never can decay!
I send thee flowers, O dearest! and I deem
That from their petals thou wilt hear sweet words,
Whose music, clearer than the voice of birds,
When breathed to thee alone, perchance, may seem
All eloquent of feelings unexpressed.
O, wreathe them in those tresses of dark hair!
Let them repose upon thy forehead fair,
And on thy bosom's yielding snow be pressed!
Thus shall thy fondness for my flowers reveal
The love that maiden coyness would conceal!

II.

THE STARS.

WHAT marvel is it, that, in other lands
And ancient days, men worshipped the divine
And brilliant majesty of stars that shine
Pure in their lofty spheres, like angel-bands?
With a deep reverence, when evening came,
With her high train of shadows, have I bowed
Beneath the heaven, as each new-lighted flame
Glowed in the sapphire free from mist or cloud:
A holy presence seemed to fill the air,
Invisible spirits, such as live in dreams,
Came floating down on their celestial beams,
And from my heart there rose a silent prayer.
What marvel, then, that men of yore could see
In each bright star a glorious deity?

III.

SPRING.

THE birds sing cheerily, the streamlets shout
As if in echo; tones are all around:
The air is filled with one pervading sound
Of merriment. Bright creatures flit about;
Slight spears of emerald glitter from the ground,
And frequent flowers, like helms of bloom, are found;
And, from the invisible army of fair things,
Floats a low murmur like a distant sea!
I hear the clarions of the insect-kings
Marshal their busy cohorts on the lea.
Life, life in action, — 't is all music, all,
From the enlivening cry of children free
To the swift dash of waters as they fall,
Released by thee, O Spring, to glad, wild liberty!

IV.

TWILIGHT.

CALM twilight! in thy mild and silent time,
When summer flowers their perfume shed around,
And naught, save the deep, solitary sound
Of some far bell, is heard, with solemn chime
Tolling for vespers, or the evening bird
Pouring sweet music o'er the woodland glade,
As if to viewless sprites and fairies played,
Who join in dances when the strain is heard:
Then thoughts of those beloved and dearest come
Like sweetest hues upon the shadowed wave;
And joys, that blossomed in the bowers of home,
The dews of memory with freshness lave.
O, that my last daybeam of life would shine,
Serenely beautiful, calm hour, as thine!

V.

(Written in view of the harbor of New York from the banks of the North River, on the loveliest and calmest of the last days of autumn.)

Is this a painting? Are those pictured clouds
Which on the sky so movelessly repose?
Has some rare artist fashioned forth the shrouds
Of yonder vessel? Are these imaged shows
Of outline, figure, form, or is there life —
Life with a thousand pulses — in the scene
We gaze upon? Those towering banks between,
E'er tossed these billows in tumultuous strife?
Billows! there 's not a wave! the waters spread
One broad, unbroken mirror! all around
Is hushed to silence — silence so profound
That a bird's carol, or an arrow sped
Into the distance, would, like larum bell,
Jar the deep stillness and dissolve the spell!

VI.

A STORM IN AUTUMN.

Off in the West there is a sea of blue: —
While gloomiest vapors, clustering on high,
Tell that the hour of storm is drawing nigh;
For dark they rise, and darker to the view.
O, coldly from the East careers the gale, —
Sharp as adversity, or the pang of grief
Which sears the heart like Autumn's withered leaf
When those we love in their affection fail.
Now from the scattering mists, relentless Rain
Falls in chill drops, precursors of the shower
That soon will prostrate the unsheltered flower,
Blooming of late securely on the plain.
It comes! in sudden gusts it rushes down;
And angry clouds o'er all the landscape frown!

VII.

DOMESTIC LOVE.

WHEN those we love are present to the sight,
When those we love hear fond affection's words,
The heart is cheerful, as in morning light
The merry song of early-wakened birds:
And, oh! the atmosphere of home — how bright
It floats around us, when we sit together
Under a bower of vine in summer weather,
Or round the hearthstone on a winter's night!
This is a picture not by Fancy drawn: —
The eve of life contrasted with its dawn;
A gray-haired man, — a girl with sunny eyes;
He seems to speak, and, laughing, she replies:
While father, mother, brothers smile to see
How fair their rosebud blooms beneath the parent tree!

VIII.

THE SAME.

WHEN those we love are absent — far away,
When those we love have met some hapless fate,
How pours the heart its lone and plaintive lay,
As the wood-songster mourns her stolen mate!
Alas! the summer bower — how desolate!
The winter hearth — how dim its fire appears!
While the pale memories of by-gone years
Around our thoughts like spectral shadows wait.
How changed the picture! here, they all are parted
To meet no more, — the true, the gentle-hearted!
The old have journeyed to their bourne; the young
Wander, if living, distant lands among;
And now we rest our dearest hopes above;
For heavenly joy alone can match domestic love!

IX.

SNOW.

FROM their innumerable breasts and wings —
All undiscerned by these our mortal eyes,
Hid in the folds of yonder misty skies,
More like imagined sprites than real things —
Celestial doves are shedding their white plumes,
And the whole land is covered with a shower
Of motes as fair as is an unsunned flower
Which, when it opens, yields its short-lived blooms
Vestured all over like a bride in white,
But colder than a corpse within its shroud;
The earth sleeps sparkling in the silver light
Of the soft snow, which, like a feathery cloud,
Still falls, as gently as Hope's dreams, or Love's,
From the pure forms of those celestial doves.

X.

TO A LADY.

'T is winter now, — but spring will blossom soon,
And flowers will lean to the embracing air,
And the young buds will vie with them to share
Each zephyr's soft caress; and when the Moon
Bends her new silver bow, as if to fling
Her arrowy lustre through some vapor's wing,
The streamlets will return the glance of night
From their pure, gliding mirrors, set by spring
Deep in rich frames of clustering chrysolite,
Instead of winter's crumbled sparks of white.
So, dearest! shall our loves, though frozen now,
By cold unkindness, bloom like buds and flowers,
Like fountain's flash, for Hope with smiling brow
Tells of a spring whose sweets shall all be ours!

HENRY THEODORE TUCKERMAN.

I.

FREEDOM.

FREEDOM! beneath thy banner I was born.
O, let me share thy full and perfect life!
Teach me opinion's slavery to scorn,
And to be free from passion's bitter strife;
Free of the world, a self-dependent soul,
Nourished by lofty aims and genial truth,
And made more free by love's serene control,
The spell of beauty and the hopes of youth:
The liberty of Nature let me know,
Caught from her mountains, groves, and crystal streams;
Her starry host, and sunset's purple glow,
That woo the spirit with celestial dreams,
On fancy's wing exultingly to soar,
Till life's harsh fetters clog the heart no more!

II.

ON A LANDSCAPE, BY BACKHUYSEN.

NOT for the eye alone are here outspread
Skies, fields, and herds in such divine repose;
The soul of beauty that to these is wed
Through the fair landscape tremulously glows!
We seem to feel the meadow's grateful air,
Hear the low breathing of the dreamy kine,
And the pure fragrance of the harvest share,
Until our hearts all cold distrust resign,
Feeling once more to truth and love allied;
And, while the fresh tranquillity we view,
Each good they have foretold and life denied,
Hope's sweetest promises again renew;
As if the twilight angel hovered there,
To waft from nature's rest a balm for human care.

III.

TO JENNY LIND.

A MELODY with Southern passion fraught
I hear thee warble : 't is as if a bird
By intuition human strains had caught,
But whose pure breast no kindred feeling stirred :
Thy native song the hushed arena fills,
So wildly plaintive that I seem to stand
Alone, and see, from off the circling hills,
The bright horizon of the North expand !
High art is thus intact ; and matchless skill
Born of intelligence and self-control, —
The graduated tone and perfect trill
Prove a restrained, but not a frigid soul ;
Thine finds expression in such generous deeds,
That music from thy lips for human sorrow pleads !

IV.

DESOLATION.

THINK ye the desolate must live apart,
By solemn vows to convent-walls confined?
Ah! no; with men may dwell the cloistered heart,
And in a crowd the isolated mind:
Tearless behind the prison-bars of fate,
The world sees not how desolate they stand,
Gazing so fondly through the iron grate
Upon the promised yet forbidden land;
Patience, the shrine to which their bleeding feet
Day after day in voiceless penance turn;
Silence, the holy cell and calm retreat,
In which unseen their meek devotions burn:
Life is to them a vigil, which none share,
Their hopes a sacrifice, their love a prayer.

V.

TO ONE DECEIVED.

ALL hearts are not disloyal; let thy trust
Be deep and clear and all-confiding still;
For though Love's fruit turn on the lips to dust,
She ne'er betrays her child to lasting ill:
Through leagues of desert must the pilgrim go
Ere on his gaze the holy turrets rise;
Through the long sultry day the stream must flow
Ere it can mirror twilight's purple skies.
Fall back unscathed from contact with the vain,
Keep thy robes white, thy spirit bold and free,
And calmly launch affection's bark again,
Hopeful of golden spoils reserved for thee.
Though lone the way as that already trod,
Cling to thine own integrity and God!

VI.

LOVE SONNETS.

I.

O FOR a castle on a woodland height!
High mountains round, and a pure stream below,
Within all charms that tasteful hours invite,
Wise books of poesy and music's flow;—
A grassy lawn through which to course our steeds,
A gothic chapel in seclusion reared,
Where we could solace find for holiest needs,
And grow by mutual rites the more endeared:
How such captivity alone with thee
Would lift to Paradise each passing day!
Then all revealed my patient love would be,
And thou couldst not a full response delay;
For Truth makes holy Love's illusive dreams,
And their best promise constantly redeems.

VII.

LOVE SONNETS.

2.

THE rain-drops patter on the casement still,
So hushed the room, each faint watch-tick I hear,
The crackling of the embers seems to fill
This brooding quiet with an accent clear:
I 've looked awhile upon the gifted page,
Glanced at the dingy roofs and leaden sky,
Or paced the floor my mind to disengage,
Chiding the languid hours as they fly;
In vain! the thought of thee o'ermasters all,
Now waking joy, and now a dark surmise,
As Memory spreads her banquet or her pall,
And bids me hopeless sink or gladsome rise:
On what bright wings these lonely hours would flee,
Dared I but feel that thou hast thought of me!

VIII.

LOVE SONNETS.

3.

THE buds have opened, and in leafy pride
Woo the soft winds of this capricious May;
With a refreshing green the fields are dyed,
And clearer sparkles on the waters play.
All Nature speaks of boundless promise now,
In tones as sweet as thine, — her hand is laid
With a maternal greeting on my brow,
Until its fevered throbbings all are stayed;
And I am fain to lie upon her breast,
Unconscious of the world, divorced from pain,
Drink from her rosy lips the balm of rest,
And be her glad and trustful child again:
But such fond dalliance claims a spirit free,
And all her spells are broken — without thee!

IX.

LOVE SONNETS.

4.

WHAT though our dream is broken? Yet again
  Like a familiar angel it shall bear
Consoling treasures for these days of pain,
  Such as they only who have grieved can share:
As unhived nectar for the bee to sip,
  Lurks in each flower-cell which the spring-time brings,
As music rests upon the quiet lip,
  And power to soar yet lives in folded wings;
So let the love on which our spirits glide
  Flow deep and strong beneath its bridge of sighs,
No shadow resting on the latent tide
  Whose heavenward current baffles human eyes,
Until we stand upon the holy shore,
And realms it prophesied at length explore.

WILLIAM GILMORE SIMMS.

OBJECTS WHICH INFLUENCE THE AMBITIOUS NATURE.

I.

TROPHIES. — HOW PLANTED.

THE trophies which shine out for eager eyes,
In youth's first hour of progress, and delude
With promise dearest to ambitious mood,
Lie not within life's limits, but arise
Beyond the realm of sunset; — phantoms bright
Glowing above the tomb, having their roots
Even in the worshipper's heart; — from whence their fruits,
And all that thence grows precious to man's sight!
Thence, too, their power to lure from beaten ways
That Love hath set with flowers, and thence the spell,
'Gainst which the blood denied may ne'er rebel,
That leads to sleepless nights, and toilsome days,
And sacrifice of all those human joys
That to the ambitious nature seem but toys.

II.

WHERE PLANTED.

It is the error of the impatient heart
To hope undying gifts, even while the strife
Is worst; and struggling 'gainst its mortal part,
The glorious Genius laboring still for life,
Springs even from death to birth! 'T is from his tomb
The amaranth rises which must wreathe his brow,
And crown his memory with unfading bloom;
Rooted in best affections, it will grow,
Though watered by sad tears, and watched by pride
Made humble in rejection! Love denied,
Shall tend it through all seasons, and shall give
Her never-failing tenderness, — though still
Be the proud spirit, and the unyielding will,
That through the mortal made the immortal live!

III.

THE TRIUMPH.

THE grave but ends the struggle! — Follows then
The triumph, which, superior to the doom,
Grows loveliest, and looks best to mortal men,
Purple in beauty, towering o'er the tomb!
O, with the stoppage of the impulsive tide
That vexed the impatient heart with needful strife,
The soul that is Hope's living leaps to life,
And shakes her fragrant plumage far and wide!
Eyes follow then in worship which but late
Frowned in defiance; — and the timorous herd
That sleekly waited for another's word
Grow bold at last to bring — obeying Fate —
The tribute of their praise but late denied, —
Tribute of homage which is sometimes — hate!

IV.

GLORY AND ENDURING FAME.

THUS Glory hath her being! thus she stands
Star-crowned, — a high divinity of woe;
Her temples fill, her columns crown all lands
Where lofty attribute is known below.
For her the smokes ascend, the waters flow,
The grave foregoes his prey, the soul goes free;
The gray rock gives out music; hearthstones grow
To temples at her word; her footprints see
On ruins, that are thus made holiest shrines,
Where Love may win devotion, and the heart
That with the fire of genius inly pines
May find the guidance of a kindred art,
And from the branch of that eternal tree
Pluck fruits at once of death and immortality!

WILLIAM HENRY BURLEIGH.

I.

THE BROOK.

"LIKE thee, O stream! to glide in solitude
Noiselessly on, reflecting sun or star,
Unseen by man, and from the great world's jar
Kept evermore aloof; methinks 't were good
To live thus lonely through the silent lapse
Of my appointed time." Not wisely said,
Unthinking Quietest! The brook hath sped
Its course for ages through the narrow gaps
Of rifted hills and o'er the reedy plain,
Or 'mid the eternal forests, not in vain;
The grass more greenly groweth on its brink,
And lovelier flowers and richer fruits are there,
And of its crystal waters myriads drink
That else would faint beneath the torrid air.

II.

RAIN.

DASHING in big drops on the narrow pane,
And making mournful music for the mind,
While plays his interlude the wizard Wind,
I hear the ringing of the frequent rain:
How doth its dreamy tone the spirit lull,
Bringing a sweet forgetfulness of pain,
While busy thought calls up the past again,
And lingers 'mid the pure and beautiful
Visions of early childhood! Sunny faces
Meet us with looks of love, and in the moans
Of the faint wind we hear familiar tones,
And tread again in old familiar places!
Such is thy power, O Rain! the heart to bless,
Wiling the soul away from its own wretchedness!

JAMES DIXON.*

I.

TO A ROBIN.

SWEET Bird! that, hidden by the dark green leaves,
Didst pour thy pleasant song at break of day,
Making glad music round my flower-wreathed eaves;
Why has thy gentle warbling died away?
Come not the zephyrs from the sweet southwest
As freshly to thy leaf-embosomed nest?
Less fragrant are the flowers of summer's prime?
Or pin'st thou for thy far-off southern clime?
Or is it that thy noisy young have flown,
Leaving their green home in the o'ershadowing tree,
That thus thou mournest desolate and lone,
Where once thy song burst forth so loud and free?
Alas! that summer's perfumed airs should bring
Sorrow to one like thee, so light of heart and wing!

* Born 1814.

II.

CONNECTICUT RIVER.

WANDERING 'mid flowery banks, or loud and hoarse
Foaming o'er rock and crag, all wild and free,
From the deep woods that hide thy shaded source,
To where thy waters mingle with the sea,
Beautiful River! like a dream of love
Thy deep waves glide — blue as the sky above.
Bright are the happy homes along thy shores,
Shaded by drooping elms that kiss thy wave;
And grassy banks, that bloom with gay wild-flowers,
Thy calm and murmuring waters gently lave;
And warbling birds, with music sweet as thine,
Sing in the branches of the o'erhanging vine
A song whose notes are with us evermore,
Stealing our hearts away to wander by thy shore.

III.

SUNSET AFTER A STORM.

Lo! where the mountains mingle with the sky
A breaking light in all the glowing west!
And slowly now its lustre spreads on high,
As the veiled sun sinks calmly to his rest:
The broken clouds are bathed in golden light,
That mingle sweetly with the sky's deep blue,
And, as the twilight fades, from heaven's far height
The first bright star of eve is shining through:
The low wind's voice falls gently on the ear,
And with it, to the lone and weary heart,
Comes a deep joy, that, could it ne'er depart,
Might make us sigh to dwell forever here:
It may not be! E'en from such glorious skies,
O, who can tell how sad a morn may rise!

IV.

MOONLIGHT IN JUNE.

THOU hast a gentle ministry, O Moon!
Riding in solemn silence through the sky,
And gazing from thy trackless path on high
Upon the beauty of the leafy June:
On such a lovely night, I ween, as this,
ENDYMION felt thy pale lip's dewy kiss;
For far around on every plain and hill,
In the soft gleaming of thy gleaming ray,
Flower, tree, and forest, breathless now and still,
Rest from the burning brightness of the day;
Silence is over all. Yon murmuring rill
Alone leaps gladly on its tireless way:
In thy soft rays how beautiful is Night!
Like man's cloud-covered path, by woman's love made
bright!

V.

TO MRS. SIGOURNEY,

With a "Forget-me-not" from the grave of KEATS, on whose tombstone are inscribed these words:—

"HERE LIES ONE WHOSE NAME WAS WRIT IN WATER."

WANDERING in Rome, for thee a gift I sought:
Around me were the wonders of the past;
And modern Art, on every side, had cast
Her gems of richest beauty. Yet methought
These were scarce worthy thee. At length I stood,
One Sabbath eve, beside the grave of KEATS;
The turf was bright with flowers that gave their sweets
To the soft night-air, as in mournful mood:
Sad thoughts came o'er me, and I could have wept
That all the hopes that in the Poet's heart,
As in a sanctuary, had been kept,
Could fade so soon, and perish, and depart;
I plucked this flower for thee, the Muses' happiest daughter,
And joyed to think *thy name* should ne'er be "writ in water."

REV. NORMAN PINNEY.*

I.

CALM Twilight! in thy wild and stilly time,
When summer flowers their perfumes shed around,
And naught, save the deep, solitary sound
Of some far bell is heard, with solemn chime
Tolling for vespers, or the evening bird,
Carolling music in the shady grove,
Sweet as the pure outpourings of first love,
While not a leaf by Zephyr's breath is stirred, —
Bright thoughts of those beloved and dearest come,
Like sunset rays upon the azure wave;
And joys which blossomed in the bower of home
The dews of memory with freshness lave.
O, that my last day-beams of life would shine,
As mildly beautiful, calm hour, as thine!

* Born at Simsbury in 1804.

II.

STILL unto thee, my brightest, fairest, best,
The wandering heart returns as the pure dove
Seeking in vain the olive-branch of love,
Nor finding peace save in its ark of rest.
My flight has been wide, o'er the tossing wave :
Nor bower, nor tree, nor mantling vine were there ;
And like rich pearls deep in their ocean cave,
Were hidden all things beautiful and fair.
Send me not forth again, though the fair sky
Smile o'er the green enamelling of earth ;
Bright joys again be clustered round the hearth,
And the air rife with breathing melody ;
Still to its resting-place the dove would flee ; —
Angel of beauty ! shall it dwell with thee ?

HUGH PETERS.*

I.

AD POETAS.

Quod si me lyricis vatibus inseres,
Sublimi feriam sidera vertice.

YE are a wise and goodly company;
A very worthy noble brotherhood;
Nectar your drink, ambrosia your food;
Ye cannot fail of immortality!
When ye would sleep, sweet will your slumbering be;
For Musa 'neath you spreads a couch of down,
Or airy gossamer with rose-leaves strewn,
Fit hovering place for dreams of phantasy;
And when ye wake, if ye would music have,
For you Apollo wakes his echoing strings;
Or would ye ride, Pegasus spreads his wings,
And off ye fly through air, o'er earth and wave!
O happy band! I'll "give you honor due,"
If ye will deign admit me of your crew!

Born 1807; died 1831.

II.

TO THE MOON.

HAIL, "great Diana," "virgin Queen of night!"
"Pale, silent orb," "mild Luna," new or full,
Crescent or gibbous! if thought not too dull,
List to the prayer of a poor rhyming wight!
Behold thy servant in a piteous plight!
My soul is sad, my coat is growing old;
My heart is heavy, and my heels are cold;
Both in and out I am a sorry sight;
Ideas and ink are gone, — I cannot write, —
And when I could, they said I was a loon
For offering incense at thy shrine, O Moon!
They call me mad, and that unmans me quite:
Regina, hear me! if I 'm not a dunce,
Moonstrike my brain, and make me so at once!

GEORGE H. BOKER.*

I.

I DO assure thee, love, each kiss of thine
Adds to my stature, makes me more a man,
Lightens my care, and draws the bitter wine
That I was drugged with, while my nature ran
Its slavish course. For didst not thou untwine
My cunning fetters? break the odious ban,
That quite debased me? free this heart of mine,
And deck my chains with roses? While I can
I 'll chant thy praises, till the world shall ring
With thy great glory; and the heaping store
Of future honors, for the songs I sing,
Shall miss thy poet, at thy feet to pour
A juster tribute, as the gracious spring
Of my abundance. — Kiss me, then, once more.

* "Plays and Poems, by George H. Boker. Boston: Ticknor and Fields. 1856."

The sonnets by Mr. Boker are replete with the beauty and harmony of poetic diction, and his *love* sonnets are almost Shakespearian in their delicacy and plaintiveness. See the Essay on American Sonnets, I. 107–115, where five of his sonnets are already given.

II.

I SHALL be faithful, though the weary years
Spread out before me like a mountain chain
Rugged and steep, ascending from the plain,
Without a path; though where the cliff uprears
Its sternest front, and echoes in my ears
My own deep sobs of solitary pain,
It is my fate to scale; though all in vain
I spend my labor, and my idle tears
Torture but me: I know, despite my ill,
That with each step a little wastes away, —
A little of this life wastes day by day;
And far beyond the desert which I fill
With my vast sorrow, I have faith to say
That we shall meet; so I press onward still.

III.

THE AWAKING OF THE POETIC FACULTY.

ALL day I heard a humming in my ears,
A buzz of many voices, and a throng
Of swarming numbers, passing with a song
Measured and stately as the rolling spheres'.
I saw the sudden light of lifted spears,
Slanted at once against some monster wrong;
And then a fluttering scarf which might belong
To some sweet maiden in her morn of years.
I felt the chilling damp of sunless glades,
Horrid with gloom; anon, the breath of May
Was blown around me, and the lulling play
Of dripping fountains. Yet the lights and shades,
The waving scarfs, the battle's grand parades
Seemed but vague shadows of that wondrous lay.

IV.

Love is that orbit of the restless soul
Whose circle grazes the confines of space,
Bounding within the limits of its race
Utmost extremes; whose high and topmost pole
Within the very blaze of heaven doth roll;
Whose nether course is through the darkest place
Eclipsed by hell. What daring hand shall trace
The blended joys and sorrows that control
A heart whose journeys the fixed hand of Fate
Points through this pathway? Who may soar so high,—
Behold such glories with unwinking eye?
Who drop so low beneath his mortal state,
And thence return with careful chart and date,
To mark which way another's course must lie?

V.

WHERE lags my mistress while the drowsy year
Wakes into spring? Lo! Winter sweeps away
His snowy skirts, and leaves the landscape gay
With early verdure; and there 's merry cheer
Among the violets, where the sun lies clear
On the south hillsides; and at break of day
I heard the bluebird busy at my ear;
And swallows shape their nests of matted clay
Along the eaves, or dip their narrow wings
Into the mists of evening. All the earth
Stirs with the wonder of a coming birth,
And all the air with feathery music rings.
Spring, it would crown thee with transcendent worth,
To bring my love among thy beauteous things.

VI.

No gentle touches of your timid hand, —
No shuddering kisses pressed upon my lip,
'Twixt fear and passion, — no bold words that strip
The feigning garb off in which we two stand,
Acting our parts, at the harsh world's command, —
No deed that offers to our dust a sip
Of heavenly nectar, — no incautious slip,
To wring a tear, yet calmly bear the brand,
For the great love through which we were betrayed!
Love flies with us on sorely crippled wings:
Prudence, and interest, and the bitter stings
Of shrewd distrust, are doled me. I am made
A beggar on your bounty. Lend me aid:
My heart starves, lady, on these wretched things.

VII.

I HAVE been mounted on life's topmost wave,
Until my forehead kissed the dazzling cloud;
I have been dashed beneath the murky shroud
That yawns between the watery crests. I rave,
Sometimes, like cursed Orestes; sometimes lave
My limbs in dews of asphodel; or, bowed
With torrid heat, I moan to Heaven aloud,
Or shrink with Winter in his icy cave.
Now peace broods over me; now savage rage
Spurns me across the world. Nor am I free
From nightly visions, when the pictured page
Of sleep unfolds its varied leaves to me,
Changing as often as the mimic stage;—
And all this, lady, through my love for thee!

VIII.

TO THE MEMORY OF M. A. R.

With the mild light some unambitious star
Illumes her pathway through the heavenly blue, —
So unobtrusive that the careless view
Scarce notes her where her haughtier sisters are, —
So ran thy life. Perhaps, from those afar,
Thy gentle radiance little wonder drew,
And all their praise was for the brighter few.
Yet mortal vision is a grievous bar
To perfect judgment. Were the distance riven,
Our eyes might find that star so faintly shone
Because it journeyed through a higher zone,
Had more majestic sway and duties given,
Far loftier station on the heights of Heaven,
Was next to God, and circled round his throne.

IX.

TO J. M. B.

I WONDER, darling, if there does not wear
Something from love, with love's so daily use,
If in the sweetness of his vigorous juice
Time's bitter finger dips not here and there?
What thing of earthly growth itself can bear
Above its nature, overrule abuse,
And, like the marvel of the widow's cruse,
Freshen its taint, and all its loss repair?
I can but wonder at the faithful heart
That makes thy face so joyous in my sight,
And fills each moment with a new delight.
I can but wonder at the shades that start
Across thy features as we stand to-night,
With lips thus clinging, in the act to part.

X.

No hope is mine, no comfort mine; for I
Am as an exile, and no pilgrim's grace
Nerves my despair; I never can retrace
The paths I trod, though myriads pass me by,
Journeying, light-hearted, to the happy place
Whence I am driven. Thou, Nature, on whose face
I look for aid, dost close thy weary eye
Against my grief. The moon wanes in the sky,
The flowers dry up and perish, the great sea
Through all its land-locked arteries ebbs; the dew
Lies sickening on the blighted branch; no new
Creation opens with the spring: to me
There is no crescent moon, no bud, no view
Of refluent tides, no fruit, — nor will there be.

XI.

Absence from thee is something worse than death;
For to the heart that slumbers in the shroud,
What are the mourners' tears and clamors loud,
The open grave, the dismal cypress wreath?
The quiet body misses not its breath;
The pain that shivers through the weeping crowd
Is idle homage to the visage proud
That changeth not for all Affliction saith.
But to be thus, from thee so far away,
Is as though I, in seeming death, might be
Conscious of all that passed about my clay;
As though I saw my doleful obsequy,
Mourned my own loss, rebelled against decay,
And felt thy tear-drops trickling over me.

XII.

TO ENGLAND.

LEAR and Cordelia! 't was an ancient tale
Before thy Shakespeare gave it deathless fame:
The times have changed, the moral is the same.
So, like an outcast, dowerless and pale,
Thy daughter went, and in a foreign gale
Spread her young banner, till its sway became
A wonder to the nations. Days of shame
Are close upon thee: prophets raise their wail.
When the rude Cossack with an outstretched hand
Points his long spear across the narrow sea, —
"Lo! there is England!" — when thy destiny
Storms on thy straw-crowned head, and thou dost stand
Weak, helpless, mad, a by-word in the land, —
God grant thy daughter a Cordelia be!

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

I.

I ASK not for those thoughts, that sudden leap
From being's sea, like the isle-seeming kraken,
With whose great rise the ocean all is shaken,
And a heart-tremble quivers through the deep;
Give me that growth, which some perchance deem sleep,
Wherewith the steadfast coral-stems uprise,
Which, by the toil of gathering energies,
Their upward way into clear sunshine keep,
Until, by Heaven's sweetest influences,
Slowly and slowly spreads a speck of green
Into a pleasant island in the seas,
Where, 'mid tall palms, the cane-roofed home is seen,
And wearied men shall sit at sunset's hour,
Hearing the leaves, and loving God's dear power.

II.

TO M. W., ON HER BIRTHDAY.

MAIDEN! when such a soul as thine is born,
The morning stars their ancient music make,
And, joyful, once again their song awake,
Long silent now with melancholy scorn;
And thou, not mindless of so blest a morn,
By no least deed its harmony shalt break,
But shalt to that high chime thy footsteps take,
Through life's most darksome passes unforlorn:
Therefore from thy pure faith thou shalt not fall,
Therefore shalt thou be ever fair and free,
And in thine every motion musical
As summer-air, majestic as the sea,
A mystery to those who creep and crawl
Through Time, and part it from Eternity!

III.

BELOVED! in the noisy city here
The thought of thee can make all turmoil cease;
Around my spirit, folds thy spirit clear
Its still, soft arms, and circles it with peace:
There is no room for any doubt or fear
In souls so overfilled with love's increase;
There is no memory of the by-gone year,
But growth in heart's and spirit's perfect ease.
How hath our love — half nebulous at first —
Rounded itself into a full-orbed sun!
How have our lives and wills (as haply erst
They were, ere this forgetfulness begun)
Through all their earthly distantness outburst,
And melted, like two rays of light, in one!

IV.

TO A. C. L.

THROUGH suffering and sorrow thou hast passed
To show us what a woman true may be:
They have not taken sympathy from thee,
Nor made thee any other than thou wast,
Save as some tree, which in a sudden blast
Sheddeth those blossoms that are weakly grown
Upon the air, but keepeth every one
Whose strength gives warrant of good fruit at last:
So thou hast shed some blooms of gayety,
But never one of steadfast cheerfulness;
Nor hath thy knowledge of adversity
Robbed thee of any faith in happiness,
But rather cleared thine inner eyes to see
How many simple ways there are to bless!

RICHARD HENRY WILDE.

I.

TO LORD BYRON.

Byron! 't is thine alone, on eagles' pinions,
In solitary strength and grandeur soaring,
To dazzle and delight all eyes; outpouring
The electric blaze on tyrants and their minions;
Earth, sea, and air, and powers and dominions,
Nature, man, time, the universe exploring;
And from the wreck of worlds, thrones, creeds, opinions,
Thought, beauty, eloquence, and wisdom storing:
O, how I love and envy thee thy glory,
To every age and clime alike belonging;
Linked by all tongues with every nation's glory.
Thou Tacitus of song! whose echoes, thronging
O'er the Atlantic, fill the mountains hoary
And forests with the name my verse is wronging.

II.

TO THE MOCKING-BIRD.

WINGED mimic of the woods! thou motley fool!
Who shall thy gay buffoonery describe?
Thine ever-ready notes of ridicule
Pursue thy fellows still with jest and gibe:
Wit, sophist, songster, YORICK of thy tribe,
Thou sportive satirist of Nature's school;
To thee the palm of scoffing we ascribe,
Arch-mocker and mad Abbot of Misrule!
For such thou art by day, — but all night long
Thou pour'st a soft, sweet, pensive, solemn strain,
As if thou didst in this thy moonlight song
Like to the melancholy JACQUES complain,
Musing on falsehood, folly, vice, and wrong,
And sighing for thy motley coat again.

JOHN HOWARD BRYANT.

I.

THERE is a magic in the moon's mild ray,—
What time she softly climbs the evening sky,
And sitteth with the silent stars on high,—
That charms the pang of earth-born grief away.
I raise my eye to the blue depths above,
And worship Him whose power, pervading space,
Holds those bright orbs at peace in his embrace,
Yet comprehends earth's lowliest things in love.
Oft, when the silent moon was sailing high,
I 've left my youthful sports to gaze, and now,
When time with graver lines has marked my brow,
Sweetly she shines upon my sobered eye.
O, may the light of truth, my steps to guide,
Shine on my eve of life, — shine soft, and long abide.

II.

'T is Autumn, and my steps have led me far
To a wild hill, that overlooks a land
Wide-spread and beautiful. A single star
Sparkles new-set in heaven. O'er its bright sand
The streamlet slides with mellow tones away.
The west is crimson with retiring day;
And the north gleams with its own native light.
Below, in autumn green, the meadows lie,
And through green banks the river wanders by,
And the wide woods with autumn hues are bright, —
Bright, but of fading brightness! — soon is past
That dreamlike glory of the painted wood:
And pitiless decay o'ertakes, as fast,
The pride of men, the beauteous, great, and good.

GEORGE HENRY CALVERT.

I.

ON THE FIFTY-FIFTH SONNET OF SHAKESPEARE.

THE soul leaps up to hear this mighty sound,
Of Shakespeare triumphing. With glistening eye,
Forward he sent his spirit, to espy
Time's gratitude, and catch the far rebound
Of fame from worlds unpeopled yet; and, crowned
With brightening light through all futurity,
His image to behold up-reaching high,
'Mongst the world's benefactors most renowned.
Like to the ecstasy, by man unnamed,
The spheral music doth to gods impart,
Was the deep joy that thou hast here proclaimed
Thy song's eternal echo gave thy heart.
O, the world thanks thee that thou 'st let us see,
Thou knew'st how great thou wast, how prized to be!

II.

TO THE STATUE OF EVE, BY POWERS.

WHO that has had of beauteous womanhood
Translucent visions, in his holiest dreams,
Or when the abstracted, waking mind so teems
With images of beauty that 't will brood,
In happiest silence, on the fertile mood
So deeply, till each outward thing but seems
Fantastic, while the flashing, inward gleams
Compound a loveliness that would be wooed
As a reality, — were such to come
Before thee, with a virgin joy, his soul,
Like a new spirit in Elysium,
Would gush with ecstasy, while from it roll
All memories of dreams or inward sight,
Paled by the fulgence of thy wondrous light.

NATHANIEL PARKER WILLIS.

I.

STORM had been on the hills: the day had worn
As if a sleep upon the hours had crept;
And the dark clouds that gathered at the morn
In dull, impenetrable masses slept,
And the wet leaves hung droopingly, and all
Was like the mournful aspect of a pall.
Suddenly, on the horizon's edge, a blue
And delicate line, as of a pencil, lay,
And, as it wider and intenser grew,
The darkness removed silently away;
And, with the splendor of a god, broke through
The perfect glory of departing day:
So, when his stormy pilgrimage is o'er,
Will light upon the dying Christian pour.

II.

ACROSTIC SONNET.

ELEGANCE floats about thee like a dress,
Melting the airy motion of thy form
Into one swaying grace; and loveliness,
Like a rich tint that makes a picture warm,
Is lurking in the chestnut of thy tress,
Enriching it, as moonlight after storm
Mingles dark shadows into gentleness.
A beauty that bewilders like a spell
Reigns in thy eye's clear hazel, and thy brow,
So pure in veined transparency, doth tell
How spiritually beautiful art thou, —
A temple where angelic love might dwell.
Life in thy presence were a thing to keep,
Like a gay dreamer clinging to his sleep.

WILLIAM HENRY CUYERL HOSMER.

I.

ON A CASCADE NEAR WYOMING.

A BROOK, the woody mountain's bounding child,
With a deep murmur in its silvery flow,
Falls, in its journey over rocks up-piled,
On the green carpet of the glen below.
Above the cascade aged hemlocks throw
Their mossy branches, flecked with drops of spray,
Like warders old, that watch around bestow,
Stationed on rocky battlements of gray.
In haunts like these, when baffled in the fight
That drenched a groaning land with crimson showers,
The sturdy champions of the true and right
Have gathered to repair their wasted powers,
And rousing hymns of God and freedom heard,
Sung by the tumbling wave and tameless bird!

II.

NIGHT.

O NIGHT! I love thee as a weary child
  Loves the maternal breast on which it leans!
  Day hath its golden pomp, its bustling scenes;
But richer gifts are thine: the turmoil wild
Of a proud heart thy low, sad voice hath stilled,
  Until its throb is gentler than the swell
Of a light billow, and its chamber filled
  With cloudless light, with calm unspeakable:
Thy hand a curtain lifteth, and I see
  One who first taught my heart with love to thrill,
  Though long ago her lip of song grew still:
A strange mysterious power belongs to thee,
  To morning, noon, and twilight-time unknown;
  For the dead gather round thy starry throne!

EPES SARGENT.*

I.

THE DEPARTURE.

AGAIN thy winds are pealing in mine ear!
Again thy waves are flashing in my sight!
Thy memory-haunting tones again I hear,
As through the waves our vessel wings her flight!
On thy cerulean breast, now swelling high,
Again, thou broad Atlantic, am I cast!
Six years, with gathering speed, have glided by,
Since, an adventurous boy, I hailed thee last;
The sea-birds o'er me wheel, as if to greet
An old companion; on my naked brow
The sparkling foam-drops not unkindly beat;
Flows through my hair the freshening breeze; and now
The horizon's ring enclasps me; and I stand
Gazing where fades from view, cloud-like, my father-land!

* From "Shells and Sea-Weeds, or, Records of a Summer Voyage to Cuba," in his "Songs of the Sea, 1847."

II.

THE AWAKENING.

How changed the scene! our parting gaze, last night,
Was on the three-hilled city's swelling dome, —
The dome, o'erlooking from its stately height
Full many a sacred spire and happy home.
Rose over all, clouding the azure air,
A canopy of smoke, swart Labor's sign;
While, like a forest Winter has stripped bare,
Bristled the masts along the water's line.
But now, the unbroken ocean and the sky
Seem to enclose us in a crystal sphere;
A new creation fills the straining eye;
No bark save ours,— no human trace is here!
But in the brightening east, a crimson haze
Floats up before the sun, his incense fresh of praise!

III.

TROPICAL WEATHER.

Now we 're afloat upon the tropic sea!
Here Summer holdeth a perpetual reign:
How flash the waters in their bounding glee!
The sky's soft purple is without a stain!
Full in our wake the smooth, warm trade-winds, blowing,
To their unvarying goal still faithful run!
And as we steer, with sails before them flowing,
Nearer the zenith daily climbs the sun.
The startled flying-fish around us skim,
Glossed, like the humming-bird, with rainbow dyes;
And, as they dip into the water's brim,
Swift in pursuit the preying dolphin hies.
All, all is fair; and, gazing round, we feel
Over the yielding sense the torrid languor steal.

JAMES BAYARD TAYLOR.

I.

FROM THE NORTH.

ONCE more without you! — sighing, dear, once more,
For all the sweet, accustomed ministries
Of wife and mother: not as when the seas
That parted us my tender message bore
From the gray olives of the Cretan shore
To those that hid the broken Phidian frieze
Of our Athenian home, — but far degrees,
Wide plains, great forests, part us now: my door
Looks on the rushing Neva, cold and clear:
The swelling domes in hovering splendor lie,
Like golden bubbles, eager to be gone,
But the chill crystal of the atmosphere
Withholds them; and along the northern sky
The amber midnight smiles in dreams of dawn!

II.

CHRISTMAS SONNETS.

I.

TO G. H. B.

IF that my hand, like yours, dear George, were skilled
To win from Wordsworth's scanty plot of ground
A shining harvest, such as you have found,
Where strength and grace, fraternally fulfilled,
As in those sheaves whose rustling glories gild
The hills of August, folded are and bound:
So would I draw my loving tillage round
Its borders, let the gentlest rains be spilled,
The goldenest suns its happy growth compel,
And bind for you the ripe, redundant grain:
But ah! you stand amid your songful sheaves
So rich, this weed-born flower you might disdain,
Save that of me its growth and color tell,
And of my love some perfume haunt its leaves.

III.

CHRISTMAS SONNETS.

2.

TO E. C. S.

WHEN days were long, and o'er that farm of mine,
Green Cedarcroft, the summer breezes blew,
And from the walnut-shadows I and you,
Dear Edmund, saw the red lawn-roses shine,
Or, following our idyllic Brandywine
Through meadows flecked with many a flowery hue,
To where with wild Arcadian pomp I drew
Your Bacchic march among the startled kine, —
You gave me, linked with old Mæonides,
Your loving sonnet, — record dear and true
Of days as dear; and now, when suns are brief
And Christmas snows are on the naked trees,
I give you this, — a withered winter leaf,
Yet with your blossom from one root it grew!

IV.

CHRISTMAS SONNETS.

3.

TO R. H. S.

THE years go by, old friend! Each, as it fleets,
Moves to a farther, fairer realm the time
When first we twain the pleasant land of rhyme
Discovered, choosing side by side our seats
Below our separate gods: in midnight streets
And haunted attics flattered by the chime
Of silver words, and fed by faith sublime,
I Shelley's mantle wore, you that of Keats, —
Dear dreams, that marked the Muse's childhood then,
Nor now to be disowned! The years go by:
The clear-eyed goddess flatters us no more,
And yet, I think, in soberer aims of men
And servitude of Song, that you and I
Are nearer, dearer, faithfuller than before.

V.

CHRISTMAS SONNETS.

4.

TO J. L. G.

If I could touch with Petrarch's pen this strain
Of graver song, and shape to liquid flow
Of soft Italian syllables the glow
That warms my heart, my tribute were not vain;
But how shall I such measured sweetness gain
As may your golden nature fitly show,
And with the heart-light shine, that fills you so,
It pales the graces of the cultured brain?
Long have I known, Love better is than Fame,
And Love hath crowned you; yet if any bay
Cling to my chaplet when the years have fled
And I am dust, may this which bears your name
Cling latest, that my love's result shall stay,
When that which mine ambition wrought is dead!

RICHARD HENRY STODDARD.

I.

TO BAYARD TAYLOR,

ON HIS FORTIETH BIRTHDAY.*

"WHOM the gods love die young," we have been told,
And wise of some the saying seems to be;
Of others foolish; as it is of thee,
Who proven hast, "Whom the gods love live old."
For have not forty seasons o'er thee rolled,
The worst propitious, — setting like the sea
Towards the haven of prosperity,
Now full in sight, so fair the wind doth hold?
Hast thou not fame, the poet's chief desire;
A wife, whom thou dost love, who loves thee well;
A child, in whom your differing natures blend;
And friends, troops of them, who respect, — admire?
(How deeply *one*, it suits not now to tell;)
Such lives are long, and have a perfect end.

New York, January 11, 1865.

II.

TO EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN.

(With a volume of Shakespeare's Sonnets.)

HAD we been living in the antique days,
With him whose young but cunning fingers penned
These sugared sonnets to his strange-sweet friend,
I dare be sworn we would have won the bays.
Why not? We could have twined in amorous phrase
Sonnets like these, where love and friendship blend,
(Or were they writ for some more private end?)
And this, we see, remembered is with praise.
Yes, there 's a luck in most things, and in none
More than in being born at the right time,
It boots not what the labor to be done,
Or feats of arms, or arts, or building rhyme.
Not that the heavens the little can make great,
But many a man has lived an age too late!

III.

TO JAMES LORIMER GRAHAM, JR.

(With a volume of Shakespeare's Sonnets.)

WHAT can I give him, who so much hath given, —
That princely heart, so over kind to me,
Who, richly guerdoned both of earth and heaven,
Holds for his friends his heritage in fee?
No costly trinket of the golden ore,
Nor precious jewel of the distant Ind:
Ay me! these are not hoarded in my store,
Who have no coffers but my grateful mind.
What gift then, — nothing? Stay, this book of song
May show my poverty and thy desert,
Steeped as it is in love, and love's sweet wrong,
Red with the blood that ran through Shakespeare's heart.
Read it once more, and, fancy soaring free,
Think, if thou canst, that I am singing thee!

IV.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

ENGLAND, if Time from out the Book of Fame
  Should blot the desperate valor of thy men,
In the Crimea, an Englishwoman's name,
  As sweet as ever came from poet's pen,
Would still defy him, — Florence Nightingale!
  Honor to that fair girl, whose pitying heart
  Led her across the sea, to ease the smart
Of soldier-wounds, and soothe the soldier's wail.
Men can be great when great occasions call:
  In little duties women find their spheres, —
The narrow cares that cluster round the hearth;
  But this dear woman wipes a nation's tears,
And wears the crown of womanhood for all:
Happy the land that gave such goodness birth!

V.

COLONEL FREDERICK TAYLOR.

(Gettysburg, July 3, 1863.)

MANY the ways that lead to death, but few
Grandly, and one alone is glory's gate, —
Standing wherever free men dare their fate,
Determined, as thou wert, to die — or do!
This thou hast passed, young soldier, storming through
The fiery darkness round it, — not too late
To know the invaders beaten from thy State, —
Ah, why too soon to rout them, and pursue?
But some must fall as thou hast fallen; some
Remain to fight, and fall another day;
And some go down in peace to their long rest.
If 't were not now, it would be still to come;
And whether now, or when thy hairs were gray,
Were fittest for thee — God alone knows best.

VI.

TO JERVIS McENTEE, ARTIST.

JERVIS, my friend, I envy you the art
  Which you profess, and which possesses you,
  To mimic Nature; unto her so true,
Your pictures are what she is to the heart,
The mystery of which it is a part,
  That gladdens when we crush the vernal dew,
  And saddens when leaves fall, and flowers are few;
Nor quite forsakes us in the noisy mart
Whence she is banished, save in slips of sky
  That swim in mist, or drip in dreary rain,
No glimpse of peaks far off, nor forests nigh,
  Only dark streets, strange forms, a barren pain;
Till to my wall I turn a longing eye,
  When you restore me mountains, woods again!

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN.*

I.

A MOTHER'S PICTURE.

SHE seemed an angel to our infant eyes!
Once, when the glorifying moon revealed
Her who at evening by our pillow kneeled —
Soft-voiced and golden-haired, from holy skies
Flown to her loves on wings of Paradise —
We looked to see the pinions half concealed.
The Tuscan vines and olives will not yield
Her back to me, who loved her in this wise,
And since have little known her, but have grown
To see another mother tenderly
Watch over sleeping darlings of my own:
Perchance the years have changed her; yet alone
This picture lingers: still she seems to me
The fair, young angel of my infancy.

* Since the preliminary essay on American Sonnets and Sonneteers was written, my attention has been directed to a set of sonnets, few in number, but of exquisite beauty, by Edmund C. Stedman of New York. They are to be found in his two volumes of poetry, "Poems Lyrical and Idyllic," published by Mr. Charles Scribner of New York, and "Alice of Monmouth, with Other Poems," published by Mr. Carleton of the same city. There are but four

II.

HOPE DEFERRED.

Bring no more flowers and books and precious things!
O, speak no more of our beloved Art,
Of summer haunts, — melodious wanderings
In leafy refuge from this weary mart:
Surely such thoughts were dear unto my heart;
Now every word a newer sadness brings!
Thus oft some forest-bird, caged far apart
From verdurous freedom, droops his careless wings,
Nor craves for more than food from day to day;
So long bereft of wildwood joy and song,
Hopeless of all he dared to hope so long, —
The music born within him dies away:
Even the song he loved becomes a pain,
Full-freighted with a longing all in vain.

of these sonnets in all. Two of them are constructed according to the true Italian model. The other two end with rhyming couplets, and therefore have that epigrammatic termination which the Italian masters considered fatal to the beauty of the sonnet. Mr. Stedman is nevertheless a genuine sonneteer in spirit, if not always in form; and a little further study of the peculiar structure of this species of poem will place him in the front rank of sonnet-writers. Indeed, I shall not attempt to decide whether the sonnets hereafter quoted have not already won him that position.

III.

THE SWALLOW.

HAD I, my love declared, the tireless wing
That wafts the swallow to her northern skies,
I would not, sheer within the rich surprise
Of full-blown Summer, like the swallow, fling
My coyer being; but would follow Spring,
Melodious consort, as she daily flies,
Apace with suns that o'er new woodlands rise
Each morn — with rains her gentler stages bring.
My pinions should beat music with her own;
Her smiles and odors should delight me ever,
Gliding, with measured progress, from the zone
Where golden seas receive the mighty river,
Unto yon lichened cliffs, whose ridges sever
Our Norseland from the Arctic surge's moan.

IV.

TO B. T.

(With a copy of the Iliad.)

BAYARD, awaken not this music strong,
While round thy home the indolent sweet breeze
Floats lightly as the summer breath of seas
O'er which Ulysses heard the Sirens' song!
Dreams of low-lying isles to June belong,
And Circe holds us in her haunts of ease;
But later, when these high ancestral trees
Are sear, and such Odyssean languors wrong
The reddening strength of the autumnal year,
Yield to heroic words thine ear and eye:
Intent on these broad pages thou shalt hear
The trumpet's blare, the Argive battle-cry,
And see Achilles hurl his hurtling spear,
And mark the Trojan arrows make reply.

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH.

I.

EUTERPE.

Now if Euterpe held me not in scorn,
I 'd shape a lyric, perfect, fair, and round
As that thin band of gold wherewith I bound
Your slender finger our betrothal morn.
Not of Desire alone is music born,
Not till the Muse wills is our passion crowned:
Unsought she comes, if sought but seldom found.
Hence is it poets often are forlorn,
Taciturn, shy, self-immolated, pale,
Taking no healthy pleasure in their kind,
Wrapt in their dream as in a coat of mail.
Hence is it I, the least, a very hind,
Have stolen away into this leafy vale,
Drawn by the flutings of the silvery wind.

II.

PURSUIT AND POSSESSION.

WHEN I behold what pleasure is Pursuit,
What life, what glorious eagerness it is;
Then mark how full Possession falls from this,
How fairer seems the blossom than the fruit, —
I am perplext, and often stricken mute,
Wondering which attained the higher bliss,
The wingéd insect, or the chrysalis
It thrust aside with unreluctant foot.
Spirit of verse which still eludes my art,
You shapes of loveliness that still do haunt me,
O never, never rest upon my heart,
If when I have thee I shall little want thee!
Still flit away in moonlight, rain, and dew,
Wills o' the wisp, that I may still pursue!

III.

ACCOMPLICES.

(Virginia, 1865.)

THE soft new grass is creeping o'er the graves
By the Potomac; and the crisp ground-flower
Lifts its blue cup to catch the passing shower;
The pine-cone ripens, and the long moss waves
Its tangled gonfalons above our braves.
Hark, what a burst of music from yon bower! —
The Southern nightingale that, hour by hour,
In its melodious summer madness raves.
Ah, with what delicate touches of her hand,
With what sweet voices, Nature seeks to screen
The awful Crime of this distracted land, —
Sets her birds singing, while she spreads her green
Mantle of velvet where the Murdered lie,
As if to hide the horror from God's eye.

IV.

EGYPT.

FANTASTIC Sleep is busy with my eyes :
I seem in some waste solitude to stand
Once ruled of Cheops : upon either hand
A dark, illimitable desert lies,
Sultry and still, — a realm of mysteries ;
A wide-browed Sphinx, half buried in the sand,
With orbless sockets stares across the land,
The wofulest thing beneath these brooding skies
Where all is woful, weird-lit vacancy.
'T is neither midnight, twilight, nor moonrise.
Lo ! while I gaze, beyond the vast sand-sea
The nebulous clouds are downward slowly drawn,
And one bleared star, faint-glimmering like a bee,
Is shut i' the rosy outstretched hand of Dawn.

PAUL H. HAYNE.

I.

ANCIENT FABLES.

Ye pleasant myths of eld, why have ye fled?
The earth has fallen from her blissful prime
Of summer years; the dews of that sweet time
Are withered on its garlands sear and dead.
No longer in the blue fields overhead
We list the rustling of immortal wings,
Or hail at eve the kindly visitings
Of gentle Genii to fair fortunes wed:
The seas have lost their Nereids, the sad streams
Their gold-haired habitants, the mountains lone
Those happy Oreads; and the blithesome tone
Of Pan's soft pipe melts only in our dreams:
Fitfully fall the old Faith's broken gleams
On our dull hearts cold as sepulchral stone.

II.

PENT in this common sphere of sensual shows,
I pine for beauty, — beauty of fresh mien,
And gentle utterance, and the charm serene,
Wherewith the hue of mystic dreamland glows ;
I pine for lulling music, the repose
Of low-voiced waters, in some realm between
The perfect Aidenn, and this clouded scene
Of love's sad loss, and passion's mournful throes ;
A pleasant country, girt with twilight calm,
In whose fair heaven a moon of shadowy round
Wades through a fading fall of sunset rain ;
Where drooping lotos flowers, distilling balm,
Dream by the drowsy streamlets Sleep hath crowned,
And Care forgets to sigh, and Patience conquers Pain.

III.

Now, while the Rear-Guard of the flying Year,
Rugged December, on the season's verge,
Marshals his pale Days to the mournful dirge
Of muffled winds in far-off forests drear,
Good friend! turn with me to our in-door cheer;
Draw nigh, the huge flames roar upon the hearth,
And this sly sparkler is of subtlest birth,
And a rich vintage poet souls hold dear;
Mark how the sweet rogue wooes us! Sit thee down,
And we will quaff, and quaff, and drink our fill,
Topping the spirits with a Bacchanal crown,
Till the funereal blast shall wail no more,
But silver-throated clarions seem to thrill,
And shouts of triumph peal along the shore.

IV.

OCTOBER.

THE passionate summer 's dead! — the sky 's aglow
With roseate flushes of matured desire,
The winds at eve are musical, and low
As sweeping chords of a lamenting lyre,
Far up among the pillared clouds of fire,
Whose pomp of strange procession upwards rolls
With gorgeous blazonry of pictured scrolls,
To celebrate the summer's past renown;
Ah me! How regally the heavens look down
O'ershadowing beautiful autumnal woods,
And harvest-fields with hoarded increase brown,
And deep-toned majesty of golden floods,
That lift their solemn dirges to the sky,
To swell the purple pomp that floateth by.

V.

POETS OF THE OLDEN TIME.

THE brave old poets sing of nobler themes
Than the weak griefs that haunt our coward souls;
The torrent of their lusty music rolls,
Not through dark valleys of distempered dreams,
But murmurous pastures, lit by sunny streams;
Or, rushing from some mountain-height of thought,
Swells to strange meaning that our minds have sought
Vainly to gather from the doubtful gleams
Of our more gross perceptions. O, their strains
Nerve and ennoble manhood! — no shrill cry,
Set to a treble, tells of querulous woe; —
Yet numbers deep-voiced as the mighty main's
Merge in the ring-dove's plaining, or the sigh
Of lovers whispering where sweet streamlets flow!

VI.

O GOD! what glorious seasons bless thy world!
See! the tranced Winds are nestling on the deep;
The guardian Heavens unclouded vigil keep
O'er the mute Earth; the beach-birds' wings are furled
Ghost-like and gray, where the dim billows, curled
Lazily up the sea-strand, sink in sleep,
Save when the random fish with lightning-leap
Flashes above them; the far sky 's impearled,
Inland, with lines of silvery smoke that gleam
Upward from quiet homesteads, thin, and slow:
The sunset girds me like a gorgeous dream,
Pregnant with splendors, by whose marvellous spell
Senses and soul are flushed to one deep glow;
A purple-vestured Mood more grand than words may tell.

VII.

O FAITHFUL heart! on balmy nights like this,
I long to tell thee all the love I bear, —
My sacred love! that knows not doubt, or fear,
Fixéd in golden round of married bliss;
The rapture of our first betrothal kiss
Thrills through me now, as warmly fond and dear
As when with eager soul I bent to hear
Thou didst not deem my tremulous vows amiss.
TIME cannot chill a love so true as ours,
But rather, like a spiritual SUN, matures
Affection's bloom, and brightens all its flowers;
Thus, that which charmed in youth our manhood lures,
For passion wins from age its noblest powers,
And love 's evolved from love, whilst love endures.

VIII.

AN HOUR agone! — and prostrate Nature lay
Like some sore-smitten creature nigh to death,
With feverish, parchéd lips, with laboring breath,
And languid eyeballs, darkening to the day;
A burning NOONTIDE ruled with merciless sway
Earth, wave, and air; the ghastly-stretching heath,
The sullen trees, the fainting flowers beneath,
Drooped hopeless, shrivelling in the torrid ray;—
When, like a sudden, cheerful trumpet, blown
Far off by rescuing spirits, rose the wind
Urging great hosts of clouds; the thunder's tone
Breaks into wrath; the rainy cataracts fall;
But, pausing soon, behold Creation shrined
In a new birth,— God's Covenant clasping all!

IX.

BETWEEN the sunken sun, and the new moon,
I stood in fields through which a clear brook ran
With scarce perceptible motion, not a span
Of its smooth surface trembling to the tune
Of sunset breezes! "O delicious boon,"
I cried, "of quiet! — wise is Nature's plan,
Who, in her realm as in the soul of man,
Alternates storm with calm, and the loud noon
With dewy evening's soft and sacred lull: —
Happy the heart that keeps its twilight hour,
And, in the depths of heavenly peace reclined,
Loves to commune with thoughts of tender power, —
Thoughts that ascend, like angels beautiful,
A shining Jacob's-ladder of the mind!"

X.

SPIRITS there are inwrought with vilest clay,
Which bear no God-like stamp of heavenly art,
Whose envious instincts writhe with bitter smart
Whene'er they feel some worthier nature's sway.
Ah! who so basely-born, so curst as they! —
Poor reptiles! — whose envenomed passions dart
Back to transfix their own corrupted heart,
And speed the progress of the soul's decay.
We pity such, yet loathe them. Who can keep
His honest scorn unspoken, should he see
These human vipers strive their fangs to steep
In the soul-blood of fame's Nobility?
Who but is glad when the swift lightnings leap
Of withering wrath, to blast them utterly?

THOMAS BUCHANAN READ.

I.

THE MASTER BARDS.

Ye mighty masters of the song sublime,
Who, phantom-like, with large unwavering eyes,
Stalk down the solemn wilderness of Time,
Reading the mystery of the future skies;
O, scorn not earth because it is not heaven;
Nor shake the dust against us of your feet,
Because we have rejected what was given!
Still let your tongues the wondrous theme repeat!
Though ye be friendless in this solitude,
Quick-wingéd thoughts from many an unborn year,
God-sent, shall feed ye with prolific food,
Like those blest birds which fed the ancient seer;
And Inspiration, like a wheeléd flame,
Shall bear ye upward to eternal fame!

II.

TO WORDSWORTH.

THY rise was as the morning, glorious, bright!
And Error vanished like the affrighted dark;
While many a soul, as the aspiring lark,
Waked by thy dawn soared singing to the light,
Drowning in gladdest song the earth's despite!
And Beauty blossomed in all lowly nooks:
Love, like a river made of nameless brooks,
Grew and exulted in thy wakening sight:
All nature hailed thee as a risen sun;
Nor will thy setting blur her thankful eyes!
While earth remains thy day shall not be done,
Nor cloud dispread to blot thy matchless skies;—
When Death's command, like Joshua's, shall arise,
Thou 'lt stand as stood the Sun of Gibeon.

III.

INDIAN SUMMER.

It is the season when the light of dreams
Around the year in golden glory lies; —
The heavens are full of floating mysteries,
And down the lake the veiléd splendor beams.
Like hidden poets lie the hazy streams,
Mantled with mysteries of their own romance,
While scarce a breath disturbs their drowsy trance.
The yellow leaf which down the soft air gleams,
Glides, wavers, falls, and skims the unruffled lake.
Here the frail maples and the faithful firs
By twisted vines are wed. The russet brake
Skirts the low pool; and starred with open burrs
The chestnut stands. But when the north-wind stirs,
How like an armed host the summoned scene shall wake!

IV.

BEATRICE.

THOUGH others know thee by a fonder name,
I, in my heart, have christened thee anew;
And though thy beauty in its native hue,
Shedding the radiance of whence it came,
May not bequeath to language its high claim,
Thy smiling presence, like an angel's wing,
Fans all my soul of poesy to flame,
Till even in remembering I must sing.
Such led the grand old Tuscan's longing eyes
Through all the crystal rounds of Paradise;
And, in my spirit's farthest journeying,
Thy smile of courage leads me up the skies,
Through realms of song, of beauty, and of bliss;
And therefore have I named thee Beatrice!

SONNETS TO WINTER.

I.

JOHN R. THOMPSON.

OLD WINE TO DRINK.*

YES! fill the goblet high with generous wine,
As sparkling as the draughts of ancient Massic
Or old Falernian made by Horace classic,
Brought from the sunny valleys of the Rhine,
And throwing off their daughter's brilliant glances, —
Just as the diamond, long obscured from sight,
With all the rays it last absorbed is bright,
This wine, as o'er the festal board it dances,
Gives back the flashes from the beaming eye
Of the brown vineyard beauty, on our meeting:
Fill up! to friends a kind, a cordial greeting,
And though December's winds may rustle by,
And lead the howlings of the furious storm,
Our faces kindle and our hearts are warm.

* It was a remark of one of the Spanish kings, that the four greatest blessings in life were, Old Wine to drink, Old Wood to burn, Old Books to read, and Old Friends to love.

II.

JOHN ESTEN COOKE.

OLD WOOD TO BURN.

OLD wood to burn! — hew down the highest trunk
On Alleghanian ridges, seen afar —
A monarch crowned with his imperial star —
Against the crimson where the sun has sunk.
The sharp axe glittering in his kingly heart
Sends echo ringing through the golden woods, —
And then a crashing fall! — like bursting floods
When roar the surges, and great mountains part!
The dim year wanes; I see an in-door sight, —
Bright faces gathered round a blazing fire
At Yule or Pentecost when, rising higher,
The frolic-mirth draws gladness from the light
Of that old oak that towering once so vast
Laughed at the storm, and whistled at the blast!

III.

JOHN R. THOMPSON.

OLD BOOKS TO READ.

REACH from their dusty places of repose
A Virgil's lay or "Livy's pictured page,"
The varied lore of an Augustan age, —
What visions panoramic they disclose!
With o'er-attentive faculties we hear
The wandering minstrelsy of Scio's bard, —
Poor houseless tenant of a life ill-starred, —
Or catch the minster-music of the seer
Chanting of Paradise "and all our woe."
Then, with the Christian pilgrim for our guide,
We safely pass the dark and bridgeless tide
To Beulah's land, where flowerets ever blow,
Of Shakespeare's heroes trace the storied line,
Or weigh the mercies of the Book divine!

IV.

JOHN ESTEN COOKE.

OLD FRIENDS TO LOVE.

OLD friends to love! — true soul bound to true soul
With olden memories, and traces dear
Of the dead past, claiming the happy tear
That still at sight of each will fondly roll!
Old friends! No sycophants of yesterday,
With smiles and protestations never done,
Bright summer-flies, true "lovers of the sun"
And all who bask beneath the golden ray.
Old friends! who on the battle-field of life,
When closed the serried hosts in stormy fight,
Have raised the buckler Friendship strong and bright,
And borne us bleeding from the mortal strife,
Who heart-whole, pure in faith, once written *friend*,
In life and death are true, unto the end!

HENRY TIMROD.

I.

At last, beloved Nature, I have met
Thee face to face upon thy breezy hills,
And boldly, where thy inmost bowers were set,
Gazed on thee naked in thy mountain rills:
When first I felt thy breath upon my brow,
Tears of strange ecstasy gushed out like rain,
And with a longing passionate as vain
I strove to clasp thee. But I know not how,
Always before me didst thou seem to glide,
And often from one sunny mountain-side
Upon the next bright peak I saw thee kneel,
And heard thy voice upon the billowy blast, —
But climbing, only reached that shrine to feel
The shadow of a PRESENCE which had passed.

II.

FATE! seek me out some lake far off and lone,
Shut in by wooded hills that steeply rise,
And beautiful with blue, inverted skies,
Where not a breeze but comes with softened tone,
And if the waves awake, they only moan
With a low, sullen music like the rills
That have their home among those happy hills;
And let me find — there left by hands unknown —
A bark with rifted sides, and threadbare sail,
Just strong enough to bear me from the shore,
But not to reach its tree-girt harbor more!
O happy, happy rest! O world of wail!
How calmly I would tempt the peaceful deep,
And sink with smiling brow into the dreamless sleep!

III.

ARE these wild thoughts thus fettered in my rhymes
Indeed the product of my heart and brain?
How strange that on my ear the rhythmic strain
Falls like faint memories of far-off times!
When did I feel the sorrow, act the part
Which I have striven to shadow forth in song?
In what dead century swept that mingled throng
Of mighty pains and pleasures through my heart?
Not in the yesterdays of that still life
Which I have passed so free and far from strife,
But somewhere in this weary world I know,
In some strange land, beneath some Orient clime,
I saw, or shared a martyrdom sublime,
And felt a deeper grief than any later woe.

IV.

MARY! I dare not call thy charms divine,
But all the sweetest qualities of earth,
Which constitute an humbler, holier worth,
Grace, gayety, and gentleness are thine.
A grace more glorious than the grace of form,
And moulding less thy motions than thy mind;
A gayety not thoughtless or unkind, —
Wild, and yet winning, womanly and warm;
A gentleness of heart that is not weakness,
Persuasive, potent, beautiful in meekness:
Only at times, in some excited hour,
A flash that lights the darkness of thine eyes,
Reveals a secret and a deeper power, —
A spirit he has hardiness who tries.

V.

WHICH are the clouds, and which the mountains? See,
They mix and melt together! Yon blue hill
Looks fleeting as the vapors which distil
Their dews upon its summit, while the free
And far-off clouds, now solid, dark, and still,
An aspect wear of calm eternity.
Each seems the other, as our fancies will,
The cloud a mount, the mount a cloud, and we
Gaze doubtfully. So everywhere on earth —
This foothold, where we stand, with slipping feet —
The unsubstantial and substantial meet;
And we are fooled until made wise by Time.
Is not the obvious lesson something worth,
Lady? or have I woven an idle rhyme?

VI.

(Written on a small sheet of note-paper upon which a lady had requested the author to indite some verses.)

WERE I the Poet Laureate of the Fairies,
Who in a rose-leaf finds too broad a page,
Or could I, like your beautiful canaries,
Sing with free heart and happy, in a cage,
Perhaps I might within this little space
(As in some Eastern tale by magic power
A giant is imprisoned in a flower)
Have told you something with a poet's grace;
But I need wider limits, ampler scope,
A world of freedom for a world of passion,
And even then the glory of my hope
Would not be uttered in its stateliest fashion;
Yet, lady! when fit language shall have told it,
You 'll find one little heart enough to hold it.

WILLIAM H. TIMROD.

AN AUTUMNAL DAY IN CAROLINA.

SLEEPS the soft South, nursing its delicate breath
To fan the first buds of the early spring;
And Summer, sighing, mourns his faded wreath,
Its many-colored glories withering
Beneath the kisses of the new-waked North, —
Who yet in storms approaches not, but smiles
On the departing season, and breathes forth
A fragrance as of summer, — till at whiles
All that is sweetest in the varying year
Seems softly blent in one delicious hour;
Waking dim visions of some former sphere
Where sorrows, such as earth owns, had no power
To veil the changeless lustre of the skies,
And mind and matter formed one Paradise.

II.

THE MAY QUEEN.

SARAH! throbbed not thy young heart on that day
With innocent triumph, when the youthful throng,
With rites of ancient usage, and sweet song,
Had crowned thee Queen of verdant-mantled May?
And not unmeet thy triumph, — for the voice
Of thy young peers, which singled thee from all,
To circle with the rural coronal,
Spoke merit in the Queen of their free choice!
But still remember, Sarah, thou canst find
No lasting joy in earthly diadems,
Whether of flowers composed, or costly gems:
Those fade, and these oft dazzle but to blind;
And we must look to other worlds than this
For crowns of real and abiding bliss.

JOHN G. SAXE.

I.

TO A CLAM.

Dum tacent *clam*ant.

INGLORIOUS friend! most confident I am
Thy life is one of very little ease;
Albeit men mock thee with their similes,
And prate of being "happy as a clam"!
What though thy shell protects thy fragile head
From the sharp bailiffs of the briny sea?
Thy valves are, sure, no safety-valves to thee,
While rakes are free to desecrate thy bed,
And bear thee off, — as foemen take their spoil, —
Far from thy friends and family to roam;
Forced, like a Hessian, from thy native home,
To meet destruction in a foreign broil!
Though thou art tender, yet thy humble bard
Declares, O clam! thy case is shocking hard!

II.

BEREAVEMENT.

NAY, weep not, dearest, though the child be dead;
He lives again in heaven's unclouded life,
With other angels that have early fled
From these dark scenes of sorrow, sin, and strife;
Nay, weep not, dearest, though thy yearning love
Would fondly keep for earth its fairest flowers,
And e'en deny to brighter realms above
The few that deck this dreary world of ours:
Though much it seems a wonder and a woe
That one so loved should be so early lost,
And hallowed tears may unforbidden flow
To mourn the blossom that we cherished most, —
Yet all is well: God's good design I see,
That where our treasure is, our hearts may be!

JOHN R. TAIT.

I.

TO A POET, WITH A COPY OF VERSES.

Do you remember how that once from Rome
I sent you a poor wild-flower? tribute small
To your great kindness! yet upon the wall
It grew, where bends the blue aerial dome
Above the Colosseum; and the loam
That gave it life was sacred; and o'er all
Reigned present the grand Past imperial!
And you disdained not the poor scentless bloom.
Thus may it be with these poor songs of mine, —
Less mine than Italy's, born of her skies,
Rocked to the rhythm of the swaying vine,
And nurtured where all night the rose replies
In perfumed whisperings, while all the vale
Rings with the joy of the enamored nightingale!

II.

WRITTEN AT VALLOMBROSA.

THE piny perfume of the mountain air ;
The brook's abandon on the rocky steep ;
The rustling leaves ; the tangled vines, where peep
(Like black eyes gleaming through an Oread's hair)
Large, luscious *more* 'mid the wild-flowers rare ;
The solemn forest aisles, where winds asleep
Whisper their dreamy *aves*, or in deep
Cathedral tones awake to choral prayer,
While like an echo sounds the pious choir
In the near cloisters ; — this — so grand, so lone,
So sad ! — is Vallombrosa. Gazing higher,
The purple peaks glow in the dying sun —
So beautiful ! my daring thoughts aspire,
And dwell with Milton on his cloudy throne !

III.

TO ———.

HAVE you forgotten the blest eve we sate,
Awed by the tremulous murmur of the leaves,
Rustling above us from low beechen eaves? —
You twining violets, with calm eyes, as Fate
Serenely weaves our woof predestinate.
Dear flowers, the symbols of my future years!
All my heart's impulses, its hopes and fears,
Heaved through my broken utterance. As the weight
Of fresh-fallen rain-drops bends some gentle flower,
Thus drooped your fair cheek towards me with its tears,
When (like a dream the memory appears)
I dared to kiss you. In a purple shower
Neglected fell the violets. How bright
Seemed the red sunset, and the moon that night!

IV.

THE years, swift waves upon the sea of Time,
Melt into foam behind me ; a lone bark,
My soul leaps fearless in the future dark,
Love the sweet impulse, Fame the goal sublime.
The summer seas of Youth are passed, and now
The future of uncertain joy or wreck
Can fright not Hope, the emperor of the deck,
Who holds the helm, with Prudence at the prow.
And yet to-night with Memory I stand,
Like an unwilling passenger, and gaze
With heart-sick longings at my native land,
And count the billows of long-vanished days,
The fading path with spectral fires ablaze, —
The Past's dread history traced in God's own hand.

V.

POETS.

O, THERE are gentle souls on earth imbued
With love of man and nature's loveliness,
Who, like fair trees uprising 'mid a wood,
Grow toward heaven, the while they ever bless
With pleasing shade and liberal fruitfulness
The seeker at their feet. Warm gratitude
Be theirs, and theirs the soft caress
Of gentlest zephyrs ; be their solitude
Made populous with angels, all sublime
Their history, and when the woodmen come,
Transplanting them to that far sunnier clime
Where Eden's bays will rustle welcomes home,
Then may their lives, as some grand epic tome,
Close with a lofty hope, like an immortal rhyme.

JOHN JAMES PIATT.

LEARNING PRAYERS.

THE sweet pure mother, wearing through the dust
Her heaven-white garment of fresh Christian love
Silent about her, while her patient trust
O'er cloudland sings — one sunlit bird above —
Through twilight's hushing gold bends sweet and lowly
Down on her little children, making prayers
Grow in their hearts, while their low voices slowly
Send little angels heavenward unawares:
So Nature, a sweet mother, o'er us bends,
Through this dim eve of an eternal day;
Whispers love-words, till gushing light ascends, —
Prayer's hidden fountain in the heart that lay;
And heaven's mild dew into our dream descends,
While, flame-like, close tired eyes, waiting morn's golden ray.

C. E. DA PONTE.

A LOVER'S SONNET.

HASTEN, soft wind, and when amid the gay
She moves with eyes of calm and tender light,
And forehead pale as foam-lit waves at night,
And voice harmonious as the warbling lay
Of birds that usher in the fragrant May,
Whisper, soft wind, that she remains the bright
Pure empress of this heart, whose sole delight
Is thus to muse on moments past away;
O, whisper this and tell how little I
Have known of joy since last I saw her face,
How the bright stars, lamps of yon changing sky,
Woods, streams, and every secret place,
Bear witness to my truth; yes, murmur this, then die
On those fair lips, bright opening buds of grace.

H.

TO ———

I.

Now tripping forth, the fairy-footed Spring
Awakens bud and bloom, and, liberal, fills
The air with balm, mantling the sunny hills
With living green. The purple martins wing
Their wheeling course, and, twittering sharply, sing
In treble notes a strange and keen delight;
And as they upward soar in airy flight,
Shrill through the sapphire arch their pæans ring.
O sweetheart mine! shall I unfold the theme
Bird, bud, and blossom teach our swelling hearts?
Thy tell-tale blush replies! Nor idle deem
Nor slight the lesson Nature thus imparts,
While even Zephyr from his flight above,
Stooping to kiss thy cheek, sighs tenderly of LOVE!

TO ———.

2.

NAY, chide me not that I am jealous, love;
For in my doting fondness I am grown
A very miser of the beauties thrown
Profusely round thee from the gods above:
I 'm even jealous of the pliant glove
Embracing oft thy slight and fairy hand,
And of sly Zephyr, with his whisper bland,
Who steals a-wooing from the budding grove,
And dallies o'er thy cheek with soft caress,
And of the ray that trembles as it glows
Upon thy fresh lips' loveliness;—
For that dear hand I would with mine enclose,
And lip and cheek I would were mine alone,
And mine the only heart that thou wouldst wish to own.

TO ——.

3.

Come, dear one, smile consent! Thy fair young brow
Was never arched for stern Denial's frown.
Could angels glance like April sunbeams down
From their high thrones, where burning splendors glow,
To this cold sphere, cloud-mantled, far below,
As April suns awake the budding flower,
And from its sweet cup quaff the dropping shower,
Warmed by their breath would young Love's roses glow,
From Feeling's flushing cheek they 'd kiss the tear,
And words of comfort to the worn heart tell;
And art not thou, my life, their sister dear?
Then in thy soul let kindred kindness dwell, —
Unfold the wings stretched o'er thy bosom fair
And let my wearied spirit nestle there!

TO ———.

4.

COME, dearest, to my heart. My soul and thine
A strange, ethereal, soft attraction feel:
Where'er I rove, my thoughts to thee incline;
Whate'er my purpose, still to thee I steal;
If in the temple to my God I kneel,
My prayers for pardon blend with prayers for thee;
If on my senses slumber sets her seal,
My dreaming spirit seeks thee, wild and free;
If in each other's presence blessed we stand,
Nearer and nearer still with smiles we move,
Soul melts with soul, as hand is joined in hand,
And throb and thrill attest the loadstar, love, —
Bright, burning mystery! unknown to art,
But ever gently thus attracting heart to heart.

JEDIDIAH VINCENT HUNTINGTON.

ON READING BRYANT'S POEM OF "THE WINDS."

Ye winds! whose various voices in his lay
That bard interpreted, — your utterance mild,
Nor less your ministration, fierce and wild,
Of those resistless laws which ye obey
In your apparent lawlessness, — O, say,
Is not your will-less agency reviled
When it is likened unto what is styled
By such unwise, The Spirit of the Day?
Not all the islands by tornadoes swept,
E'er knew such ruin as befalls a state,
When not the winds of God, but mortal breath,
With threatening sweetness of melodious hate,
Assaults the fabrics reverent ages kept
To shelter ancient loyalty and faith.

GEORGE LUNT.

I.

O FRIEND! whose genial spirit, by the gift
Of a most bounteous nature, flings a shower
Of magic light along life's shadowed hour;
As when day's sovereign lord, behind the rift
Of summer's brooding cloud, but looks, to lift
Incumbent heaviness from earth and sky,
With the bright beam of his exulting eye;
Think not the spirit's course, whose silent drift
Flows on more calmly than the sparkling stream,
Is sad though thoughtful, or must therefore seem
From secret care, to need some healing shrift;
Thine be, forever fresh and never coy,
The soul's bright mood;—yet not less cheerful deem
The steadfast lustre of a sober joy!

II.

A STATESMAN.

STANCH at thy post, to meet life's common doom,
It scarce seems death, to die as thou hast died;
Thy duty done, thy truth, strength, courage, tried,
And all things ripe for the fulfilling tomb!
A crown would mock thy hearse's sable gloom,
Whose virtues raised thee higher than a throne,
Whose faults were erring nature's, not his own, —
Such be thy sentence, writ with fame's bright plume,
Amongst the good and great; for thou wast great,
In thought, word, deed, — like mightiest ones of old, —
Full of the honest truth which makes men bold,
Wise, pure, firm, just; — the noblest Roman's state
Became not more a ruler of the free,
Than thy plain life, high thoughts, and matchless constancy!

HENRY LYNDEN FLASH.

ADELE.

'T WOULD seem the Fairies, to excite surprise
Among us mortals, had endowed Adele
With baby-sprites that frolicked in her eyes,
As erst they did upon some lily-bell:
So gay and arch the lovely maiden seems,
My heart recalls the creature of its dreams
In days that now are past, — the long-ago,
When in my sleep I saw her, graceful, play
Among the violets and roses gay,
In flowery vales where now the thistles grow.
The beauty of my dreams has come again,
And Joy is ringing out pale Sorrow's knell, —
The chimes are echoed in this simple strain;
Wilt thou accept it, beautiful Adele?

ALBERT LAIGHTON.

NIGHT and its dews come silently to earth,
Like kindred mourners to the grave of Day;
The stars look on with pale and throbbing ray,
As if through tears to watch them on their way:
O holy NIGHT! what thoughts awake to birth,
That slumber in the day, amid its din
And restless strife for gain, — its glare and sin!
But NIGHT! care-soothing NIGHT! — O, I would win
Thy crown of peace, and wear it on my brow;
Here, at thy starry throne I bend my knee,
All weak and humbled. I look up to thee,
And bless thee for the joy thou giv'st me now, —
A joy so hushed and deep, I tremble, lest
Dream-like, it fade away within my breast!

BENJAMIN PENHALLOW SHILLABER.

I.

ON A PICTURE OF LILLIE.

A TRUTHFUL page is childhood's lovely face,
Whereon sweet Innocence has record made, —
An outward semblance of the young heart's grace,
Where truth, and love, and trust are all portrayed.
O blessed childhood! Like the wakening day,
The auroral flash bespeaks thy rising sun,
And spreads a roseate tint about thy way,
And Hope's gay blossoms open one by one.
Sweet Lillie! As I gaze upon thy brow,
I feel my heart expanding into prayer,
That happiness may e'er maintain as now
The truthful seeming it exhibits there;
May after life no bitterness impart,
But lie, as now, like sunshine round thy heart!

II.

DOMESTIC.

It smiles! Around its dimpling mouth see play
The first glad token of a dawning love,
Like the bright glow of newly-wakening day,
Or some new glory breaking from above.
It smiles! O rapture! and the mother's heart
Beats with quick pleasure its bright gleam to see,
Springing from dawning consciousness, whose part
In after years her crowning joy may be.
There 's not a bright creation under heaven,
There 's not a pure in heaven or in earth,
There 's not an ecstasy to mortals given,
There 's not a thing of most exalted worth,
Can, in a mother's plenitude of joy,
Excel that first smile of her darling boy!

III.

CHURCH MUSIC.

O, DEARLY do I love the organ's pealing,
With psalm-tune holy or with anthem grand,
The while I drum the measure with my hand,
And gaze devoutly at the frescoed ceiling
Where modern Angelos have spent their skill,
And mimic niche and pillar make display,
And shadows fling themselves in every way,
In independence of the sun's high will.
I love to hear the voice and organ blending,
And pouring on the air a cloud of sound,
Until, as with a spell, my soul is bound,
And every faculty is heavenward tending.
Bang goes a cricket! Squalls a child, sonorous;
And earth's harsh discord drowns the heavenly chorus!

IV.

THE SNOW.

Now white and beautiful creation lies,
  Nursing its struggling germs beneath the veil;
On rushing wings the fairy snow-flake flies,
  Urged by the breath of the on-hurrying gale.
Now jingling bells thrill wildly on the ear,
  As vying coursers dart along the way, . .
Now rise in chorus tones of blithest cheer,
  As beams the moon with calm, untroubled ray.
I bless the snow! How fair its glittering sheen,
  How pure and holy is its pearly light!
Clad in its robe, the earth looks like a queen
  In the chaste vesture of her bridal night.
'T is passing fair, — yet hardly fair is that, —
An avalanche, confound it, crushes in my hat!

V.

MOONSHINE.

ROLL on, bright Moon! And if we bid or not,
It would, undoubtedly, as ever shine.
How sweetly on yon bank its beams recline,
A radiant glory hallowing the spot,
Revealing rock and shrub in mystic show,
The tall trees rising steeple-like and high,
Their forms disclosed against the western sky,
And flowers, moon-tinted there amid the glow;
Revealing lovers, vowing by that moon
Eternal fealty, everlasting truth,
And hosts of pretty oaths impelled by youth,
Rapidly made, and broken full as soon!
Revealing, too, 'mid country autumn airs,
Young men and roguish maidens "hooking" pears.

VI.

A SUMMER NIGHT.

'NEATH the mild beauty of a summer night,
I leave my chamber to enjoy the air, —
To feel its eddies circling in my hair,
And feel it kiss my brow in wild delight.
The starry gems bestud the concave high ;
O blessed Stars ! on you I fix my eye,
And long for your bright spheres to take my flight.
Beneath o'erlacing elms, shut out from sight,
I stray, my head reclined upon my breast, —
My thoughts away, away amid the blest, —
The world forgot, in my abstractions, quite.
Hark ! there 's a sound of earth, a note of bliss, —
A most ecstatic smack, I wis, —
Borne to my ear from darkness, comes a lover's kiss !

CHARLES FENNO HOFFMAN.

TO AN AUTUMN ROSE.

TELL her I love her, — love her for those eyes,
Now soft with feeling, radiant now with mirth,
Which, like a lake reflecting autumn skies,
Reveal two heavens here to us on earth, —
The one in which their soulful beauty lies,
And that wherein such soulfulness has birth.
Go to my lady, ere the season flies,
And the rude winter comes thy bloom to blast, —
Go! and with all of eloquence thou hast,
The burning story of my love discover;
And if the theme should fail, alas! to move her,
Tell her when youth's gay budding time is past,
And summer's gaudy flowering is over,
Like thee, my love will blossom to the last!

ANONYMOUS.

I.

O'ER the far waters floats the boatman's song,
Timed by the faint fall of the distant oar;
The fitful surges roll their waves along,
With hoarse and wrathful murmurings to the shore;
Through the rent woof of fleecy clouds afar
Steals on my soul like evening's holy close,
The lovely lustrous light of a lone star,
Heralding the Night-Queen to her sweet repose:
Yet all this fairy scene hath left no power,
No balm to bring my burdened heart relief,
Sitting alone in midnight's witching hour,
Bowed by the spell of an o'ermastering grief,
While half the world lies wrapped in slumber deep,
Calm as the moon's pale beams that on these waters sleep.

II.

TO POESY.

WONDERFUL Spirit! — whose eternal shrine
Is in great poets' souls, whose voice doth send
High truths and dreams prophetic without end
Into the blind world from those founts divine, —
Deep adoration from such souls is thine;
But I have loved thee, spirit, as a friend,
Wooed thee, in pensive leisure, but to lend
Thy sweetness to this wayward heart of mine,
And charm my lone thoughts into joyousness.
And I have found that thou canst lay aside
Thy terrors and thy glory and thy pride;
Quit thy proud temples for a calm recess
In lowly hearts, and dream sweet hours away,
Winning from sterner thoughts a frequent holiday.

III.

TO MY WIFE.

As some lone wanderer, in a darksome vale
Where towering mountains all in gloom enclose,
Stands through the night, and sees the chill stars pale,
In outer darkness, all their mellow glows;
At once beholds a flood of light that flows
Through some high portal in the mountain's side,
Bathing in brightness all the valley wide,
And through that gate celestial, far unfold
The vista, radiant in molten gold,
The trees and flowers, gay-decked in pearly dews,
And crystal streams through grassy meadows rolled,
And Nature, glorious in her myriad hues:
So, in life's vale, I lift mine eyes to thee,
Whose love brought light when all was gloom to me!

IV.

SABBATH MORNING.

HARK, from afar, the sound of Sabbath bells!
In solemn music pealing through the air!
Again the day of rest these notes declare;
And as their harmony uprising swells,
A voice from universal Nature tells
How sweetly in the anthem she doth share:
Soft breezes whisper to the heavens fair;
A peaceful murmur by the seaside dwells.
The melody of birds, the hum of bees,
The dew-drop falling from the buds of spring,
Each rustling leaf upon the forest trees,
Join in the strain. Now myriad angels sing:
"Prepare, ye mortals, all your jubilees,
And swell hosannahs to the Eternal King."

V.

TO A CLOUD.

THOU gorgeous cloud, in gold and purple furled,
In thy career I read a mystery;
For, like the gilded hopes of this strange world,
Thou art delusion; yet I gaze on thee,
As if thou wert what thou dost seem to be,
Rolling along the heavens, — a golden car.
'T were fine, amid the stars a wanderer free,
To lie within thy folds, and look afar
Over the teeming land and sparkling sea!
How pleasant from thy bosom to descry
You monarch mountain that doth tower so high,
A speck, — diminished to the distant eye, —
And cataracts, that pall the ear and sight,
Twinkling like tiny dew-drops in the light!

FEMALE SONNETEERS

OF AMERICA.

FEMALE SONNETEERS.

ELIZABETH OAKES SMITH.

I.

EXPRESSIONLESS.

THE thoughts which in this aching bosom dwell,
And weigh it with a sad, desponding weight,—
Like ship unbuoyant with her heavy freight,
Whose ploughing hull retards the pressing swell
Of homeward-urging sail,—within their cell,
Nameless and wordless, struggle with their fate
And yield but one deep plain,—too late! too late!
Then falter into silence. It is well!
Ah, could our lips embody all the grace
And garnered beauty of the inmost soul,
Earth were no more a blank, impeding place,
But, loosed from bonds perpetual, hymns would roll.
Thou God! most good, in each our lips to bind;—
For what were earth, did all our woe expression find!

II.

REGRETS.

MESEEMED as I did walk a crystal wall
Translucent in the hue of rosy morn,
And saw Eurydice, from Orpheus torn,
Lift her white brow from out its heavy pall,
With sweet lips echoing his melodious call,
And following him, love-led and music-borne, —
A sharp and broken cry, and she was gone!
Thou fairest grief, thou saddest type of all
Our sorrowing kind! O lost Eurydice!
Thy deathful cry thrilled in mine every vein,
When Orpheus turned him back, thus losing thee.
His broken lute and melancholy plain
All time prolongs, — the still unceasing flow
Of unavailing grief, and a regretful woe.

III.

POESY.

WITH no fond, sickly thirst for fame I kneel,
O goddess of the high-born art, to thee;
Not unto thee with semblance of a zeal
I come, O pure and heaven-eyed Poesy!
Thou art to me a spirit and a love,
Felt ever from the time when first the earth
In its green beauty, and the sky above,
Informed my soul with joy too deep for mirth.
I was a child of thine before my tongue
Could lisp its infant utterance unto thee;
And now, albeit from my harp are flung
Discordant numbers, and the song may be
That which I would not, yet I know that thou
The offering wilt not spurn, while thus to thee I bow.

IV.

AN INCIDENT.

A SIMPLE thing, yet chancing as it did,
When life was bright with its illusive dreams,
A pledge and promise seemed beneath it hid.
The ocean lay before me, tinged with beams
That lingering draped the west, a wavering stir;
And at my feet down fell a worn, gray quill:
An eagle, high above the darkling fir,
With steady flight, seemed there to take his fill
Of that pure ether breathed by him alone.
O noble bird! why didst thou loose for me
Thy eagle plume? still unessayed, unknown,
Must be that pathway fearless winged by thee:
I ask it not, no lofty flight be mine;
I would not soar like thee, in loneliness to pine!

V.

THE UNATTAINED.

AND is this life? and are we born for this?—
To follow phantoms that elude the grasp,
Or whatsoe'er secured, within our clasp
To withering lie, as if each earthly kiss
Were doomed death's shuddering touch alone to meet.
O Life! hast thou reserved no cup of bliss?
Must still THE UNATTAINED beguile our feet?
THE UNATTAINED with yearnings fill the breast,
That rob for aye the spirit of its rest?
Yes, this is Life; and everywhere we meet,
Not victor crowns, but wailings of defeat;
Yet faint thou not: thou dost apply a test,
That shall incite thee onward, upward still:
The present cannot sate, nor e'er thy spirit fill.

VI.

THE WIFE.

ALL day, like some sweet bird, content to sing
In its small cage, she moveth to and fro ;
And ever and anon will upward spring
To her sweet lips, fresh from the fount below,
The murmured melody of pleasant thought,
Unconscious uttered, gentle-toned and low.
Light household duties, evermore inwrought
With placid fancies of one trusting heart
That lives but in her smile, and turns
From life's cold seeming and the busy mart,
With tenderness, that heavenward ever yearns
To be refreshed where one pure altar burns.
Shut out from hence, the mockery of life,
Thus liveth she content, the meek, fond, trusting wife!

VII.

THE DREAM.

I DREAMED last night, that I myself did lay
Within the grave, and after stood and wept.
My spirit sorrowed where its ashes slept!
'T was a strange dream, and yet methinks it may
Prefigure that which is akin to truth.
How sorrow we o'er perished dreams of youth,
High hopes and aspirations doomed to be
Crushed and o'ermastered by earth's destiny!
Fame, that the spirit loathing turns to ruth, —
And that deluding faith, so loath to part,
That earth will shrine for us one kindred heart!
O, 't is the ashes of such things that wring
Tears from the eyes; hopes like to these depart,
And we bow down in dread, o'ershadowed by Death's wing.

VIII.

WAYFARERS.

EARTH careth for her own: the fox lies down
In her warm bosom, and it asks no more.
The bird, content, broods in its lowly nest,
Or, its fine essence stirred, with wing outflown,
Circles in airy rounds to heaven's own door,
And folds again its plume upon her breast.
Ye, too, for whom her palaces arise,
Whose Tyrian vestments sweep the kindred ground,
Whose golden chalice Ivy-Bacchus dyes,
She, kindly mother, liveth in your eyes,
And no strange anguish may your lives astound.
But ye, O pale, lone watchers for the true,
She knoweth not. In her ye have not found
Place for your stricken head, wet with the midnight
dew.

IX.

TO THE HUDSON.

O RIVER! gently as a wayward child
I saw thee 'mid the moonlight hills at rest, —
Capricious thing with thine own beauty wild.
How didst thou still the throbbings of thy breast!
Rude headlands were about thee stooping round,
As if amid the hills to hold thy stay;
But thou didst hear the far-off ocean sound,
Inviting thee from hill and vale away,
To mingle thy deep waters with its own;
And, at that voice, thy steps did onward glide,
Onward from echoing hill and valley lone.
Like thine, O, be my course, — nor turned aside,
While listing to the soundings of a land,
That, like the ocean-call, invites me to its strand.

FRANCES ANNE KEMBLE.

I.

TO SHAKESPEARE.

Oft, when my lips I open to rehearse
Thy wondrous spells of wisdom, and of power,
And that my voice, and thy immortal verse,
On listening ears and hearts, I mingled pour,
I shrink dismayed, and awful doth appear
The vain presumption of my own weak deed;
Thy glorious spirit seems to mine so near,
That suddenly I tremble as I read.
Thee an invisible auditor I fear.
O, if it might be so, my master dear!
With what beseeching would I pray to thee,
To make me equal to my noble task!
Succor from thee how humbly would I ask,
Thy worthiest works to utter worthily!

II.

WHAT is my lady like? thou fain wouldst know.
A rosy chaplet of fresh apple-bloom,
Bound with blue ribbon, lying on the snow.
What is my lady like? The violet gloom
Of evening, with deep orange light below.
She 's like the noonday smell of a pine wood;
She 's like the sounding of a stormy flood;
She 's like a mountain-top high in the skies,
To which the day its earliest light doth lend;
She 's like a pleasant path without an end;
Like a strange secret, and a sweet surprise;
Like a sharp axe of doom, wreathed with blush-roses.
A casket full of gems whose key one loses;
Like a hard saying, wonderful and wise.

III.

TO THE NIGHTINGALE.

How passing sad! Listen, it sings again!
Art thou a spirit, that amongst the boughs
The livelong night dost chant that wondrous strain,
Making wan Dian stoop her silver brows
Out of the clouds to hear thee? Who shall say,
Thou lone one, that thy melody is gay?
Let him come listen now to that one note
That thou art pouring o'er and o'er again
Through the sweet echoes of thy mellow throat,
With such a sobbing sound of deep, deep pain.
I prithee cease thy song! for from my heart
Thou hast made memory's bitter waters start,
And filled my weary eyes with the soul's rain.

IV.

TO SHAKESPEARE.

If from the height of that celestial sphere
Where now thou dwell'st, spirit powerful and sweet!
Thou yet canst love the race that sojourn here,
How must thou joy, with pleasure not unmeet
For thy exalted state, to know how dear
Thy memory is held throughout the earth,
Beyond the favored land that gave thee birth.
E'en in thy seat in heaven, thou mayst receive
Thanks, praise, and love, and wonder ever new,
From human hearts, who in thy verse perceive
All that humanity calls good and true;
Nor dost thou for each mortal blemish grieve.
They from thy glorious works have fallen away,
As from thy soul its outward form of clay.

V.

By jasper founts, whose falling waters make
Eternal music to the silent hours;
Or 'neath the gloom of solemn cypress bowers,
Through whose dark screen no prying sunbeams break:
How oft I dream I see thee wandering,
With thy majestic mien, and thoughtful eyes,
And lips, whereon all holy counsel lies,
And shining tresses of soft rippling gold,
Like to some shape, beheld in days of old
By seer or prophet, when, as poets sing,
The gods had not forsaken yet the earth,
But loved to haunt each shady dell and grove;
When every breeze was the soft breath of love;
When the blue air rang with sweet sounds of mirth,
And this dark world seemed fair as at its birth.

VI.

SPIRIT of all sweet sounds! who in mid-air
Sittest enthroned, vouchsafe to hear my prayer!
Let all those instruments of music sweet
That in great Nature's hymn bear burden meet
Sing round this mossy pillow, where my head
From the bright noontide sky is sheltered.
Thou southern wind! wave, wave thy od'rous wings;
O'er your smooth channels gush, ye crystal springs!
Ye laughing elves! that through the rustling corn
Run chattering; thou tawny-coated bee,
Who at thy honey-work sing'st drowsily;
And ye, O ye! who greet the dewy morn,
And fragrant eventide, with melody,
Ye wild wood-minstrels, sing my lullaby!

VII.

WHENE'ER I recollect the happy time
When you and I held converse dear together,
There come a thousand thoughts of sunny weather,
Of early blossoms, and the fresh year's prime;
Your memory lives forever in my mind
With all the fragrant beauties of the spring,
With od'rous lime and silver hawthorn twined,
And many a noonday woodland wandering.
There 's not a thought of you, but brings along
Some sunny dream of river, field, and sky;
'T is wafted on the blackbird's sunset song,
Or some wild snatch of ancient melody.
And, as I date it still, our love arose
'Twixt the last violet and the earliest rose.

VIII.

LIKE one who walketh in a plenteous land,
By flowing waters, under shady trees,
Through sunny meadows, where the summer bees
Feed in the thyme and clover ; on each hand
Fair gardens lying, where of fruit and flower
The bounteous season hath poured out its dower ;
Where saffron skies roof in the earth with light,
And birds sing thankfully towards heaven, while he
With a sad heart walks through this jubilee,
Beholding how, beyond this happy land,
Stretches a thirsty desert of gray sand,
Where all the air is one thick, leaden blight,
Where all things dwarf and dwindle, — so walk I,
Through my rich, present life, to what beyond doth lie.

ANNE CHARLOTTE LYNCH.

I.

ON SEEING THE IVORY STATUE OF CHRIST.

THE enthusiast brooding in his cell apart
O'er the sad image of the Crucified,
The drooping head, closed lips, and piercéd side,
A holy vision fills his raptured heart;
With heavenly power inspired, his unskilled arm
Shapes the rude block to this transcendent form.
O Son of God! thus, ever thus, would I
Dwell on the loveliness enshrined in thee, —
The lofty faith, the sweet humility,
The boundless love, the love that could not die.
And as the sculptor, with thy glory warm,
Gives to this chiselled ivory thy fair form,
So would my spirit in thy thought divine
Grow to a semblance, fair as this, of thine.

II.

THE honey-bee, that wanders all day long
The field, the woodland, and the garden o'er,
To gather in his fragrant winter store,
Humming in calm content his quiet song,
Seeks not alone the rose's glowing breast,
The lily's dainty cup, the violet's lips,
But from all rank and noxious weeds he sips
The single drop of sweetness closely prest
Within the poison chalice. Thus if we
Seek only to draw forth the hidden sweet
In all the varied human flowers we meet
In the wide garden of humanity,
And, like the bee, if home the spoil we bear,
Hived in our hearts it turns to nectar there.

III.

NIGHT closes round me, and wild threatening forms
Clasp me with icy arms and chain me down,
And bind upon my brow a cypress crown,
Dewy with tears; and heaven frowns dark with storms.
But the one glorious memory of thee
Rises upon my path to guide and bless, —
The bright Shekinah of the wilderness,
The polar star upon a trackless sea,
The beaming Pharos of the unreached shore;
It spans the clouds that gather o'er my way, —
The rainbow of my life's tempestuous day.
O blessed thought! stay with me evermore,
And shed thy lustrous beams where midnight glooms,
As fragrant lamps burned in the ancient tombs.

IV.

As some dark stream within a cavern's breast
Flows murmuring, moaning for the distant sun,—
So, ere I met thee, murmuring its unrest,
Did my life's current coldly, darkly run.
And as that stream beneath the sun's full gaze
Its separate course and life no more maintains,
But now absorbed, transfused, far o'er the plains
It floats, etherealized in those warm rays,—
So, in the sunlight of thy fervid love,
My heart, so long to earth's dark channels given,
Now soars, all doubt, all pain, all ill above,
And breathes the ether of the upper heaven;
So thy high spirit holds and governs mine,
So is my life, my being, lost in thine.

V.

THE mountain lake, o'ershadowed by the hills,
May still gaze heavenward on the evening star,
Whose distant light its dark recesses fills,
Though boundless distance must divide them far.
Still may the lake the star's bright image wear;
Still may the star, from its blue ether dome,
Shower down its silver beams across the gloom,
And light the wave that wanders darkly there.
O my life's star! thus do I turn to thee,
Amid the shadows that above me roll,
Thus from thy distant sphere thou shin'st on me,
Thus does thine image float upon my soul,
Through the wide space that must our lives dissever
Far as the lake and star, ah me! forever!

MRS. SARAH JOSEPHA HALE.

THE EMPIRE OF WOMAN.—A SERIES OF SONNETS.

I.

WOMAN'S EMPIRE DEFINED.

THE outward world, for rugged toil designed,
Where Evil from true Good the crown hath riven,
Hath been to men's dominion ever given;
But woman's empire, holier, more refined,
Moulds, moves, and sways the fallen yet God-breathed mind,
Lifting the earth-crushed heart to hope and heaven.
As plants put forth to summer's gentle wind,
And 'neath the sweet, soft light of starry even,
Those treasures which the tyrant winter's sway
Could never wrest from nature, — so the soul
Will woman's sweet and tender power obey;
Thus doth her summer smile its strength control;
Her love sow flowers along life's thorny way;
Her star-bright faith lead up towards heaven's goal.

II.

THE DAUGHTER.

THE iron cares that press strong manhood down
A father can, like school-boy tasks, throw by,
When gazing in his daughter's loving eye,
Her soft arms, like a spell, around him thrown:
And passions that, like Upas-leaves, have grown
Most deadly in dark places, which defy
Earth, Heaven, and human will, even these were shown
All powerless to resist the pleading cry
Which pierced a savage but a father's ear,
And shook a soul where pity's pulse seemed dead,
When Pocahontas, heeding not the fear
That daunted boldest warriors, laid her head
Beside the doomed! Now with our country's fame,
Sweet forest daughter! we have blent thy name.

III.

THE SISTER.

WILD as a colt, o'er prairies bounding free,
The wakening spirit of the boy doth spring,
Spurning the rein Authority would fling,
And striving with his peers for mastery:
But in the household gathering let him see
His sister's gentle smile, and it will bring
A change o'er all his nature; patiently,
As caged bird that never used its wing,
He turns him to the tasks that she doth share;
His better passions kindle by her side;
Visions of angel beauty haunt the air:
May she not summon such to be his guide?
Our Saviour listened to a sister's prayer,
When "Lazarus, from the tomb come forth!" he cried.

IV.

THE WIFE.

THE daughter from her father's bosom goes;
The sister drops her brother's clasping hand;
For God himself ordained a holier band
Than kindred blood on human minds bestows.
That stronger, deeper, dearer tie she knows,
The heart-wed wife; as heaven by rainbow spanned,
Thus bright with hope life's path before her glows;—
Proves it like mirage on the desert's sand?
Still in her soul the light divine remains;
And if her husband's strength be overborne
By sorrow, sickness, or the felon's chains,
Such as by England's noblest son were worn,
Unheeding how her own poor heart is torn,
She, angel-like, his sinking soul sustains.

V.

THE MOTHER.

EARTH held no symbol, had no living sign
To image forth the mother's deathless love;
And so the tender care the righteous prove
Beneath the ever-watching Eye Divine
Was given as type to show how pure a shrine
The mother's heart was hallowed from above;
And how her mortal hopes must intertwine
With hopes immortal; — and she may not move
From this high station which our Saviour sealed
When in maternal arms he lay revealed.
O, wondrous power and little understood,
Intrusted to the mother's mind alone,
To fashion genius, form the soul for good,
Inspire a Wirt, or train a Washington!

MRS. MARY NOEL McDONALD.

SUCCESSION OF SONNETS.*

I.

JUNE.

1.

COME with thy rose-wreaths, fair and laughing June!
Fling thy rich odors upon every gale;
Bid the blue waters wake their blithest tune,
And joy and light and melody prevail.
Thou hast a store of treasures, and with thee
We look for all things lovely: butterflies
Flit like winged jewels 'neath thy sunny skies;
And roam, with tones of music, bird, and bee.
Thou art the loveliest of the sisters three, —
Summer's most beauteous child! O, still delay,
Fairest of months! thy parting; fondly stay,
And pour thy radiant smiles on lake and lea;
Bear not from earth thy blessed gifts so soon;
Stay, stay thy flight, O fair and laughing June!

* Published in 1844, at New York. Mrs. McDonald has since married Mr. Henry Meigs.

II.

JUNE.

2.

I WOULD be with thee on the sunny hills,
And by the streams would linger, as they flow
With their perpetual music sweet and low;
And where, in light, leap out the shining rills,
Like chains of liquid diamonds, I would be.
Methinks 't were sweet to wander far and free,
Tempting each craggy height or sylvan shade, —
A loiterer where the mossy banks, inlaid
With nature's flowery gems, invite repose;
And, stealing o'er my brow, thy breath of balm
Might lull each care my beating bosom knows,
And bid the tossing waves of thought be calm;
And I might half forget life's boding ills,
Roaming with thee out on the sunny hills.

III.

JUNE.

3.

Alas! it may not be; I am forbid
By a stern duty, and my feet must press,
Day after day, in toil and weariness,
The city's streets; while in my heart is hid
Strange, passionate yearnings for a brighter spot.
My childhood's home is stealing on my sight;
In native loveliness all unforgot,
Fancy reveals it. Well I know the blight
Of time has dimmed its beauty; yet to me
It ever rises with the summer day,
Decked by thy hand in fair and fresh array;
And on its verdant slopes I long to be
A happy child, as careless and as gay,
As erst in thy bright reign I laughed the hours away.

IV.

THE FIRST SNOW.

THY mantle white is on the senseless earth,
Spirit of Winter; old Æolus rude
Pipes from his northern home in fiercest mood;
And o'er the crispéd wreaths with shouts of mirth,
And chiming bells, and laughter ringing free,
Glides the swift sleigh; while merry urchins play,
Tossing the frozen balls in heart-felt glee,
Or forming uncouth shapes of monsters grim,
To melt like youthful hopes, when next the ray
Of noontide streams on each misshapen limb.
The naked branches wear a spotless vest;
While through the window infant faces peep,
Lured from their downy beds and early sleep,
Wondering to mark the earth in wintry garments drest.

V.

THE FROZEN STREAM.

CHAINED with strong fetters, fair and restless stream,
Thine onward course, thou rover, harshly stayed,
No more by mossy bank or sylvan glade
Goest thou rejoicing; and the solar beam
That erst threw glittering gems upon thy breast,
No longer owns a power to set thee free.
Fain would the golden rays disturb thy rest,
But, faint and trembling, fail to succor thee.
A mighty arm forbids thy further flow,
And seals with icy band each sparkling wave,
Lays bare the verdant bank thou lov'st to lave
And stills thy babbling tongue; nor shalt thou know,
Sweet captive, aught of liberty again,
Till Spring with gentle hand unbinds the chilling chain.

VI.

WINTER TWILIGHT.

BRIEF hour for thought! the dark and wintry day
Is deepening into night, though no pale star
To guide the traveller with its timorous ray
Yet glimmers in the purple depths afar.
Darkness comes stealing on; — from labor free,
The weary woodman seeks his cottage door,
Where mirthful children on the sanded floor
Leap at his coming, and press round his knee.
From distant casements lights are twinkling now,
Where busy matrons still the needle ply,
Or some pale student strains the anxious eye,
And bends o'er classic page with thoughtful brow.
Stir we the fire, seek fancy's wild domain,
And rear some airy fabric's dizzy height again.

VII.

NIGHT.

DRAW down thy misty curtains, "solemn Night";
Dim the fierce fires which still illume the west;
While stars look down with sweet though distant light,
Bring to each weary thing its hour of rest:
Sleep to the little song-bird in its nest,
Dew to young blossoms, bending on the tree;
Call home, on busy wing, the housewife bee,
And seal up infant eyes, in fond arms pressed.
Be thine, to soothe earth's worn and weary child,
With hours of sweet and undisturbed repose;
Still human hearts, that beat with wants and woes;
And lull a thousand griefs, — physician mild!
The couch of pain with healthful visions bless,
And cure all ills in deep forgetfulness.

MRS. E. C. KINNEY.

I.

FADING AUTUMN.

TH' autumnal glories all have passed away;
The forest-leaves no more in hectic red
Give glowing tokens of their brief decay,
But scattered lie, or rustle at the tread,
Like whispered warnings from the mouldering dead;
The naked trees stretch out their arms all day,
And each bald hill-top lifts its reverend head
As if for some new covering to pray.
Come, WINTER, then, and spread thy robe of white
Above the desolation of this scene;
And when the sun with gems shall make it bright,
Or, when its snowy folds by midnight's queen
Are silvered o'er with a serener light,
We 'll cease to sigh for summer's living green,

II.

A WINTER NIGHT.

How calm, how solemn, how sublime the scene!
The moon in full-orbed glory sails above,
And stars in myriads around her move,
Each looking down with watchful eye serene
On earth, which, in a snowy shroud arrayed,
And still, as if in death's embrace 't were laid,
Saddens the spirit with its corpse-like mien;
Yet doth it charm the eye, — its gaze still hold;
Just as the face of one we loved, when cold
And pale and lovely e'en in death 't is seen,
Will fix the mourner's eye, though trembling fears
Fill all his heart, and thickly fall his tears.
O, I could watch, till morn should change the sight,
This cold, this beautiful, this mournful winter night!

III.

CULTIVATION.

Weeds grow unasked, and even some sweet flowers
Spontaneous give their fragrance to the air,
And bloom on hills, in vales, and everywhere,
As shines the sun, or fall the summer showers,
But wither while our lips pronounce them fair!
Flowers of more worth repay alone the care,
The nurture, and the hopes of watchful hours.
While plants most cultured have most lasting powers.
So, flowers of Genius that will longest live
Spring not in Mind's uncultivated soil,
But are the birth of time, and mental toil,
And all the culture Learning's hand can give:
Fancies, like wild-flowers, in a night may grow;
But thoughts are plants whose stately growth is slow.

IV.

ENCOURAGEMENT.

WHEN first peeps out from earth the modest vine,
Asking but little space to live and grow,
How easily some step, without design,
May crush the being from a thing so low!
But let the hand that doth delight to show
Support to feebleness the tendril twine
Around some lattice-work, and 't will bestow
Its thanks in fragrance, and with blossoms shine.
And thus, when Genius first puts forth its shoot, —
So timid that it scarce dare ask to live, —
The tender germ, if trodden under foot,
Shrinks back again to its undying root;
While kindly training bids it upward strive,
And to the future flowers immortal give.

V.

TO A VIOLET FOUND IN DECEMBER.

ILL-FATED Violet! opening thy blue eye
In Winter's face, who treacherous smiles, to see
So fair a child, of parent such as he!
And didst thou think in his chill lap to lie,
Wrapt in the fallen mantle of the tree,
Secure as if Spring's bosom cherished thee?
Ah, little flower! thy doom must be to die
By thine own sire, like Saturn's progeny.
In vain do human gentleness and love
And breathing beauty hope to meet the soul
Through which a holy influence never stole.
Though softening love the lion's heart may move,
It cannot make cold SELF itself forget;
Nor canst thou Winter change, sweet Violet.

ANNA MARIA LOWELL.

IN ABSENCE.

THESE rugged wintry days I scarce could bear,
Did I not know, that, in the early spring,
When wild March-winds upon their errands sing,
Thou wouldst return, bursting on this still air,
Like those same winds, when, startled from their lair,
They hunt up violets, and free swift brooks
From icy cares, even as thy clear looks
Bid my heart bloom and sing and break all care:
When drops with welcome rain the April day,
My flowers shall find their April in thine eyes,
Save there the rain in dreamy clouds doth stay,
As loath to fall out of those happy skies;
Yet sure, my love, thou art most like to May,
That comes with steady sun when April dies.

MRS. ELIZABETH JESUP EAMES.

NIGHT-SCENES.

I.

TWILIGHT.

THE holiest hour of earth, methinks, is thine,
O Twilight, meekly fair! Welcome to all
When, soft and sweet, thy vestal light divine
Over life's toil-worn travellers doth fall.
Then the world pauses from its busy cares;
Then play-tired children say their evening prayers;
Then the low cradle-hymn the mother weaves;
The bird folds up its wing, the flower its leaves.
Yea! hallowed of all hours since the time
God's presence blest it in the cedar shade,
When the leaves thrilled with joy, though man, afraid,
Shrank from his voice, and fled the Guest divine!
That peerless Paradise is lost, but still,
O Father! let *this hour* be free from touch of ill.

II.

THE MOON.

In her serene and solemn loveliness
She looketh down, and meets a human gaze:
Her fair familiar face, through the thin haze
Of dewy night, revealeth not the less
Her pure and perfect beauty. Fairy Moon,
Thy pearly finger silvereth the paper
Whereon I write: small need of lamp, or taper,
In this starred midnight's haunted hour of noon.
And O, the heaven-touched radiance of thy brow
Is like a dream of poetry, enchanting
All the dark depths of my lone heart, beating
With one bright vision of the past, that now
Shines seraph-like, all sanctified and sainted.
But for that spiritual presencé, O how oft my heart had fainted!

III.

THE STAR.

THERE is a star — Eve's fairest and her first —
That with unaltered beauty ever shineth:
What visions of the heart its light once nursed!
Ah! Hope's fair hand no more her rose-wreath twineth!
Beneath thy silvery rays, O peerless Star,
The beautiful floats dimly and afar.
The fair ideal wrought of the poet's dreaming
Hath left me with an ever-pining heart:
No more my fancy, with bright visions teeming,
Brings to these idle lines the inspired art,
O Angel of my youth! return once more,
And 'neath this star, which is to me a shrine,
The enchanted lamp of poesy restore,
And fill my lone heart with its light divine!

IV.

A CLOUD.

Yon delicate cloud of faintest violet,
Floating in peerless beauty 'long the sky,
Heeds not the eternal stars around it set,
But silent as a dream goes gliding by.
O wand'ring cloud! fair child of dream and vision!
Radiant illusion, shining vapor! thou
Art like our ideal pictures of Elysium, —
Too bright and brief, as from thy beauteous brow
The changeful glories pass! As thou to heaven,
Was Hope, the angel, to my future given.
Her wing is folded now! not long she wore
The dew of morning on her pearly plume,
Cloud-like she passed away; — O, nevermore
Will Hope return to gild life's grief and gloom!

MRS. ELIZABETH F. SWIFT.*

I.

TO ESTELLE.

COME out upon the dewy hills, sweet friend,
And let us study Nature's changeful face.
Look how the sun's last rays harmonious blend,
Folding the woodlands in a warm embrace;
Each glowing leaf, stirred by the evening breeze,
Gleams with prismatic hues; crimson and gold,
Purple and azure seem the waving trees;
The mists their silvery vapors have unrolled,
And hover o'er the river's troubled breast, —
River, that 'midst such deep and calm repose
Forever murmurs with a sad unrest,
Like human hearts o'erburdened with life's woes.
But see — bright messenger of Heaven, queen of the summer skies,
Filling the earth with loveliness — the Harvest-Moon arise.

* Mrs. Swift, formerly Miss Lorrain, is a Philadelphian by birth, and first-cousin of Leigh Hunt, the poet. She is the wife of Dr. Joseph T. Swift of Easton, Pa.

II.

MOONLIGHT upon the hills! there is a spell
  Like witchery o'er us: as we gaze around,
A tender light illumines hill and dell,
  Falling in golden checkers on the ground.
Now perfume steals from out the forest shades;
  All fragrant things and fair their incense bring;
And hark! amid the dim wood's tangled glades,
  I hear the gushing waters laugh and sing.
Among the clustering leaves of yonder oak
  A ring-dove's nest is hid, — list her soft moan:
Love never to Night's ear in language spoke,
  Calling with deeper fondness on its own.
World! if to thee, sin-stained, such lavish charms are given,
How can a human thought conceive the spirit joys of heaven!

MRS. EMMA CATHARINE EMBURY.

I.

CONFIDENCE IN HEAVEN.

It is in vain the weary spirit strives
With that which doth consume it; — there is born
A strength from suffering which can laugh to scorn
The stroke of sorrow, even though it rives
Our very heart-strings; but the grief that lives
Forever in the heart, and, day by day,
Wastes the soul's high-wrought energies away,
And wears the lofty spirit down, and gives
Its own dark hue to life, O who can bear?
Yet, as the black and threatening tempests bring
New fragrance to earth's flowers, and tints more fair,
So beneath sorrow's nurture virtues spring.
Youth, health, and hope may fade, but there is left
A soul that trusts in Heaven, though thus of all bereft.

II.

He who has travelled through some weary day,
And reached at summer eve a green hillside,
Whence he can see, now veiled in twilight gray,
The dreary path through which he lately hied,
While o'er his onward road the setting sun
Sheds its sweet beam on every wayside flower,
Forgets his labors ere the goal be won,
And in his heart enjoys the quiet hour.
Father and mother, be it so with you!
While memory's pleasant twilight shades the past,
May hope illume the way ye still pursue,
And each new scene seem brighter than the last;
Thus, wending on toward sunset, may ye find
Life's lengthening shadows ever cast behind.

MRS. SARAH HELEN WHITMAN.

FADED FLOWERS.

REMEMBRANCERS of happiness! to me
Ye bring sweet thoughts of the year's purple prime, —
Wild, mingling melodies of bird and bee,
That pour on summer winds their silvery chime, —
And of rich incense, burdening all the air,
From flowers that by the sunny garden wall
Bloomed at your side, nursed into beauty there
By dews and silent showers; but these to all
Ye bring. O, sweeter far than these the spell
Shrined in those fairy urns for me alone!
For me a charm sleeps in each honeyed cell,
Whose power can call back hours of rapture flown;
To the sad heart sweet memories restore, —
Tones, looks, and words of love that may return no more.

MRS. ANNA MARIA WELLS.

TO A YOUNG MOTHER.

BELINDA! the young blossom that doth lie
So lightly on thy bosom, — clasp it there;
For on her brow an empress doth not wear,
Nor in her jewelled zone, a gem more fair,
Or that doth deck her more becomingly.
Forget not, then, that deep within thy flower
The germs lie hid of lovelier, holier things: —
Filial affection, that spontaneous springs;
High *truth* and maiden *purity*; the *power*
That comes of *gentleness*; ay, and more, —
Piety, nourished in the bosom's core.
These, if so cherished, shall thy blossom bear,
And, with the dews of heavenly love impearled,
It shall adorn thee in another world.

MRS. ELIZABETH FRIES ELLET.

I.

SHEPHERD, with meek brow wreathed with blossoms sweet,
Who guard'st thy timid flock with tenderest care;
Who guid'st in sunny paths their wandering feet,
And the young lambs dost in thy bosom bear;
Who lead'st thy happy flock to pastures fair,
And by still waters at the noon of day,
Charming with lute divine the silent air,
What time they linger on the verdant way;—
Good Shepherd! might one gentle distant strain
Of that immortal melody sink deep
Into my heart, and pierce its careless sleep,
And melt by powerful love its sevenfold chain,—
O, then my soul thy voice should know, and flee
To mingle with thy flock, and ever follow thee.

II.

O WEARY heart, there is a rest for thee!
O truant heart, there is a blessed home,
An isle of gladness on life's wayward sea,
Where storms that vex the waters never come.
There trees perennial yield their balmy shade;
There flower-wreathed hills in sunlit beauty sleep;
There meek streams murmur through the verdant glade;
There heaven bends smiling o'er the placid deep.
Winnowed by wings immortal that fair isle;
Vocal its air with music from above;
There meets the exile eye a welcoming smile;
There ever speaks a summoning voice of love
Unto the heavy-laden and distressed, —
"Come unto me, and I will give you rest."

MRS. ALICE BRADLEY NEAL.

I.

MIDNIGHT.

I HAD been tossing through the restless night, —
Sleep banished from my pillow, and my brain
Weary with sense of dull and stifling pain, —
Yearning and praying for the blessed light.
My lips moaned thy dear name, beloved one;
Yet I had seen thee lying still and cold,
Thy form bound only by the shroud's pure fold,
For life with all its suffering was done.
Then agony of loneliness o'ercame
My widowed heart. Night would fit emblem seem
For the evanishing of that bright dream.
The heavens were dark: my life henceforth the same.
No hope: its pulse within my breast was dead.
No light: the clouds hung heavily o'erhead.

II.

DAYBREAK.

ONCE more I sought the casement. Lo! a ray,
Faint and uncertain, struggled through the gloom,
And shed a misty twilight on the room, —
Long-watched-for herald of the coming day!
It brought a thrill of gladness to my breast.
With claspéd hands, and streaming eyes, I prayed,
Thanking my God for light, though long delayed;
And gentle calm stole o'er my wild unrest.
"O soul!" said I, "thy boding murmurs cease.
Though sorrow bind thee as a funeral pall,
Thy Father's hand is guiding thee through all;
His love will bring a true and perfect peace.
Look upward once again, though drear the night:
Earth may be darkness; Heaven will give thee light."

TRANQUILLA.

I.

If all the world had told me thou wert false,
I had defied the world and ta'en thy part;
But when from *thee* the confirmation comes,
The arrow sinks, deep, deep, within my heart.
It bleeds to think, that, henceforth and forever,
A ghastly doubt must follow at thy side,
That confidence and holy trust can never
Beneath the shadow of our roof abide;
For unto thee a deep trust I had given,
That, in our darkest moments, cheered me on.
No gifts, no fortune, nothing under heaven
Can e'er replace that faith, it being gone!
Naught but distressing doubts, suspicious fears,
Can fill the measure of our coming years.

II.

I LOVE thee yet! for nature's ties are stronger
Than I had dreamed! I strove to break the chain,
Feeling I had no right to love thee longer;
But, in its greatest agony and pain,
My heart turned to thee, though I scorned and hated
Thy weakness and thy sin. Although, to me,
Thou wert the very thing I most abhorred,
In spite of all my wrath, my agony,
My heart turned to thee, and I could have wept
Hot tears upon thy bosom for my wrongs.
Within thy circling arms I could have slept;
For slumber had been banished from me long.
I do forgive thee, — yet the world I 'd give
Could I forget, even as I forgive.

SARAH GOULD.

PAULINE.

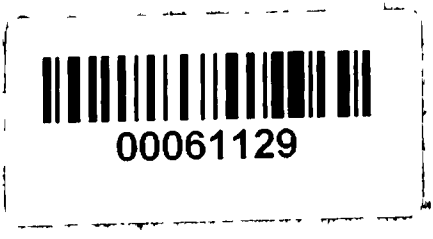
WHITE-BROWED anemones, daughters of the Sun,
And blue-eyed violets, with the mignonette,
And pale pink roses, with the valley's pet,
The myrtle, iris, lily, — every one
Becomes a sweet interpreter of thee;
And as I list the voices of thy soul,
So soft and gentle, yet in their control
Strong and subduing, clearly do I see
The latent strength that slumbers in thy spirit,
Where lofty faith, and aspirations high,
And holy loves keep closest company,
Building the heaven predestined souls inherit.
O, the sweet influence of thy soul on mine
Is as an effluence of the most Divine!

THE END.

Cambridge: Printed by Welch, Bigelow, & Co.

ERRATUM.

Vol. I. page 128, line 18, *for* whetted *read* wreathed.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